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**From:**[The Washington Post](#)**To:**

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**Subject:**

The Daily 202: Flynn sentencing memo hints at how much Mueller knows that we still don't

**Date:**

Wednesday, December 05, 2018 8:58:27 AM

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# The Daily 202



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## Flynn sentencing memo hints at how

# much Mueller knows that we still don't



Mueller suggests no jail time for Michael Flynn, cites his 'substantial assistance'



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** The most striking part of Bob Mueller's sentencing memo recommending Michael Flynn serve no prison time, because of his "substantial" assistance to "several ongoing

**investigations,” is how much got blacked out. It’s a reminder of how many shoes might still drop.**

The special counsel revealed in [a 13-page court filing](#) late Tuesday night that President Trump’s former national security adviser has given 19 interviews to his office or other Justice Department attorneys, in addition to providing “documents and communications.”

**Tantalizingly, Mueller teases that “the defendant has provided substantial assistance in a criminal investigation.” Then there are 22 fully redacted lines of text.** That is in addition to the special counsel’s probe of “any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald J. Trump.”

Mueller has asked for several postponements in making a sentencing recommendation since Flynn pleaded guilty to a single felony count of making false statements to the FBI last December, a full year ago now. **Just how much he’s gotten out of the career intelligence officer has been a closely held secret. Now we know it’s a lot, but what exactly Mueller got remains a mystery.**

“While this [document] seeks to provide a comprehensive description of the benefit the government has thus far obtained from the defendant’s substantial assistance, some of that benefit may not be fully realized at this time because the investigations in which he has provided

assistance are ongoing,” said Mueller.

**The special counsel tells the judge that Flynn flipping when he did prompted others to cooperate and was “particularly valuable because he was one of the few people with long-term and firsthand insight regarding events and issues under investigation.”**

Flynn is one of five Trump aides who have pleaded guilty as a result of the special counsel’s investigation. Mueller, who fought in Vietnam as a Marine, noted that Flynn spent 33 years in the Army, including five years of combat duty, before retiring as a three-star lieutenant general.

**“The defendant’s record of military and public service distinguish him from every other person who has been charged,” the special counsel wrote.**

“However, senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards. The defendant’s extensive government service should have made him particularly aware of the harm caused by providing false information to the government, as well as the rules governing work performed on behalf of a foreign government.”

**-- Flynn's son celebrated the news that his dad probably won't go to prison:**



**-- Mueller will file two more documents on Friday:** He is scheduled to outline details of Michael Cohen's cooperation in a letter to the judge overseeing the former Trump consigliere's sentencing. He's also due to submit a filing explaining the ways that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort breached his plea agreement by being dishonest with prosecutors.



What happened between Flynn, Trump and Comey? The Fact Checker's Timeline

**-- Mueller biographer Garrett Graff [outlines 14 questions](#) this morning that the special counsel knows the answers to and that we don't:** “Decoding Mueller’s 17-month investigation has been a publicly frustrating exercise, as individual puzzle pieces, like Flynn's sentencing memo, often don’t hint at the final assembled picture—nor even tell us if we’re looking at a single interlocking puzzle, in which all the pieces are related, or multiple, separate, unrelated ones,” Graff

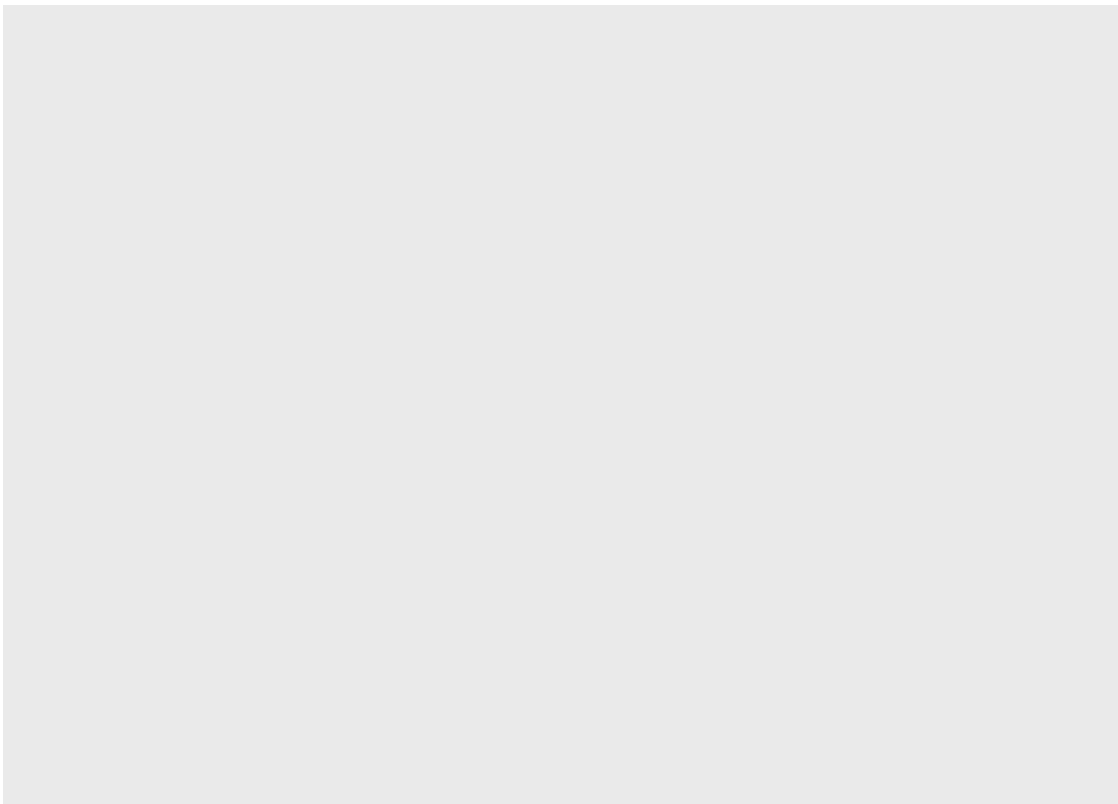
writes in a new piece [for Wired magazine](#). “Mueller’s careful, methodical strategy often only reveals itself in hindsight, as the significance of previous steps becomes clear with subsequent ones.”

1. Is Matt Whitaker overseeing the Russia probe—and is his appointment as attorney general even legal?
2. Is Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross involved in any of this?
3. How closely related is the investigation of the 2016 election to the Trump Organization’s financial scandals?
4. How did Trump himself, and the Trump family, react to Cohen’s updates on various schemes?
5. What has Felix Sater told Mueller?
6. What has George Nader told Mueller?
7. What happens to Cozy Bear?
8. Who is the (unindicted) Atlanta traveler?
9. Why was Trump’s team so concerned about the transition documents?
10. How much more of the Steele Dossier is true?
11. Is it a coincidence that the Internet Research Agency scheduled a “Down with Hillary” rally in New York, weeks in advance, for the day after WikiLeaks dumped the DNC emails?
12. Why isn’t Mueller prosecuting Maria Butina and Elena Alekseevna Khusyaynova?
13. Why is Mueller charging Michael Cohen?
14. Was the Guardian correct in reporting that Paul

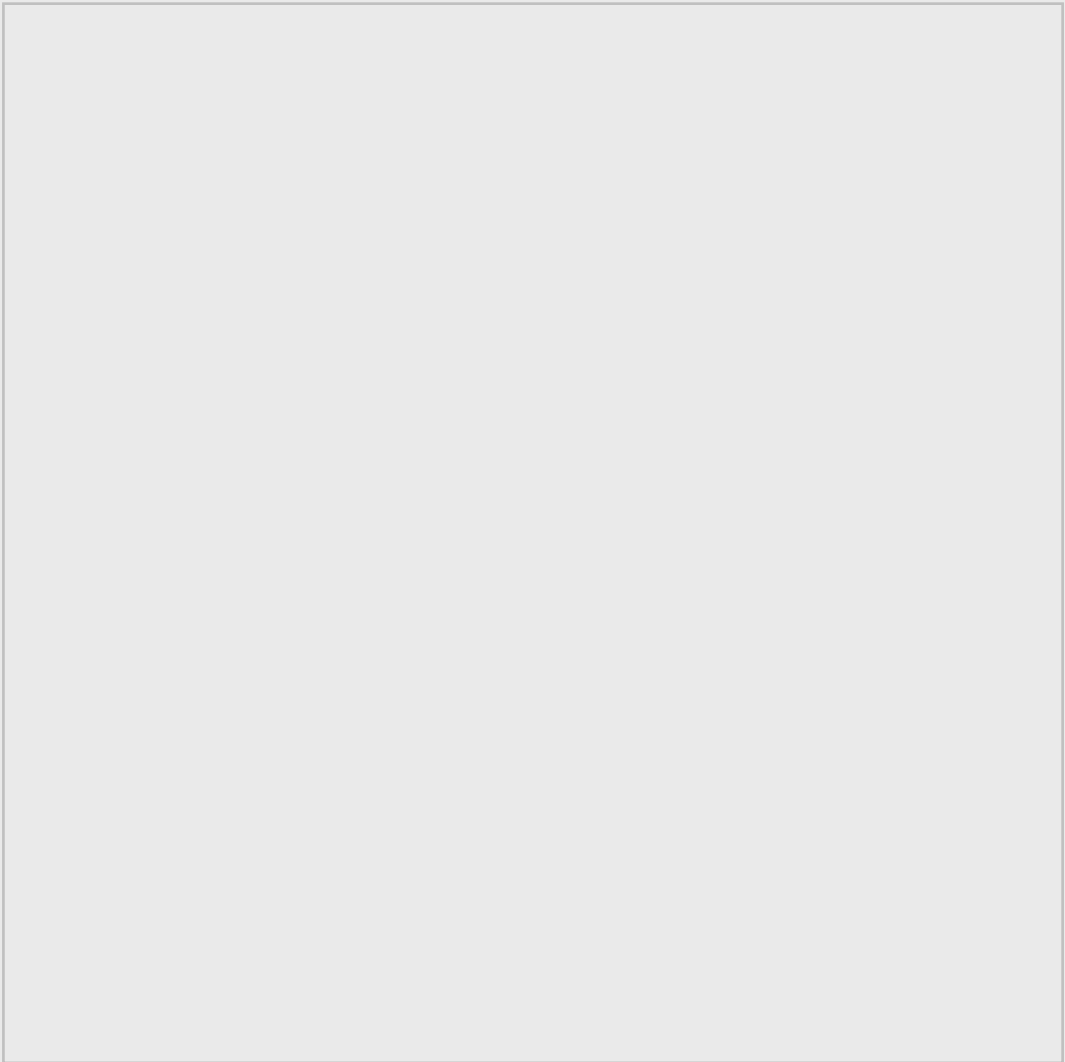
Manafort met with Julian Assange?

**-- Rudy Giuliani said he's not concerned that Flynn has given Mueller anything that would implicate Trump:** "If he had information to share with Mueller that hurt the president, you would know it by now," the president's attorney [told NBC](#). "There's a Yiddish word that fits. They don't have bupkis."

**-- New Yorker writer Jeff Toobin thinks Trump ought to be nervous about Mueller's assertion that "senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards."** "I would be a little nervous if I were the people involved in the obstruction of justice investigation, starting, of course, with the president of the United States," he said [on CNN](#).







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Acting attorney general Matt Whitaker departs a Medal of Freedom ceremony at the White House. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS:**

**-- More than 400 former DOJ employees signed a statement opposing Whitaker's appointment as acting attorney general. [NBC News's Pete Williams reports](#):** "Because Whitaker hasn't been confirmed by the Senate, his qualifications have not been publicly reviewed and there's been no vetting for potential conflicts of

interest, they say. ... The former DOJ employees call on Trump to nominate someone to succeed Jeff Sessions, whom the president fired last month, and, in the meantime, to put a Senate-confirmed person in the acting attorney general position. Protect Democracy, which organized the effort, said that the signatories 'have served under administrations of both parties' and that the vast majority were non-partisan career civil servants."

**-- Whitaker has provided no clarity on how he is handling potential conflicts of interest.** [CNN's Laura Jarrett reports](#): "For now, officials in Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's office continue to handle management of [Mueller's investigation], but Whitaker's ability to pull rank as the acting attorney general and overrule Rosenstein's judgment may prove crucial in coming weeks as the investigation winds down — leading to mounting questions about what steps Whitaker has taken, or not taken, to heed any ethics advice after now serving 28 days as the nation's top law enforcement officer. Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee renewed their concerns Tuesday, writing in a letter to Justice officials that ... 'the Department has not produced prior versions of Mr. Whitaker's financial disclosures, any ethics agreements he entered into with the Department, or any other ethics-related counseling he has received.' "

**-- Trump ally Roger Stone invoked the Fifth Amendment to avoid sharing documents and**

**testimony with the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

[Politico's Kyle Cheney reports](#): “ ‘Mr. Stone's invocation of his Fifth Amendment privilege must be understood by all to be the assertion of a Constitutional right by an innocent citizen who denounces secrecy,’ Stone's attorney, Grant Smith, said. ... In [his letter], Stone's attorney said his client simply wants his information aired in public, and not subject to selective leaks that marked his closed-door testimony to the House Intelligence Committee last year.”

**-- Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump's tweets praising Stone for not testifying against him and berating Michael Cohen add to “a growing body of evidence that the President is attempting to obstruct justice.”**

“We must ensure that the Mueller investigation proceeds without political interference, and that any and all acts of obstruction are exposed, either by Mueller in his report or by the Congress,” Schiff said in a statement. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))

**-- Former Trump campaign aide Sam Nunberg will meet next month with the Senate Intelligence Committee.** [Robert Costa reports](#): “Nunberg confirmed his pending meeting in an interview Tuesday with The Post, saying, ‘I’m happy to cooperate and appear’ for what is likely to be a closed session with committee staffers. ... Nunberg’s visit is the latest sign that the Senate Intelligence Committee’s investigation is going to

carry into the new year.”

**-- New White House counsel Pat Cipollone will start in the role on Monday after a nearly two-month delay.**

[From Politico's Eliana Johnson](#): “Even before assuming his official duties, Cipollone has reached out to several lawyers to staff an office responsible for everything from judicial nominations to federal litigation to presidential pardons. ... The new hires will begin a badly needed rebuilding of the counsel’s office. ... **A longer-than-expected security clearance process, however, prevented Cipollone from assuming the job**, even as the Mueller probe advances and a House Democratic majority draws ever nearer to assuming power. That has left Cipollone playing catchup as he tries to fill vacant posts in an office whose staff numbers in the dozens.”

**-- Another high-ranking FBI official who played key roles in the investigations into Hillary Clinton’s email server and the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russia is leaving the bureau.** [The Wall Street Journal's Byron Tau reports](#): “Bill Priestap, who currently serves as assistant director of the [FBI’s] counterintelligence division, will leave his post by the end of the year. ... Mr. Priestap’s retirement is unrelated to the controversies over the handling of the 2016 investigations, according to a person familiar with the matter. ... **After Mr. Priestap’s departure, none of the high-ranking bureau officials involved in the two**

investigations will remain with the bureau.”



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



Republican secretary of state candidate Brad Raffensperger greets supporters in Augusta, Ga. (Michael Holahan/Augusta Chronicle/AP)

**-- Republican Brad Raffensperger won the runoff race to become Georgia's secretary of state, defeating former Democratic congressman John Barrow. [Matt Viser reports](#):** "Raffensperger's election continues a losing streak for Georgia Democrats, who have not won a statewide election since 2010, and ensures that stricter election laws pushed by state Republicans remain in

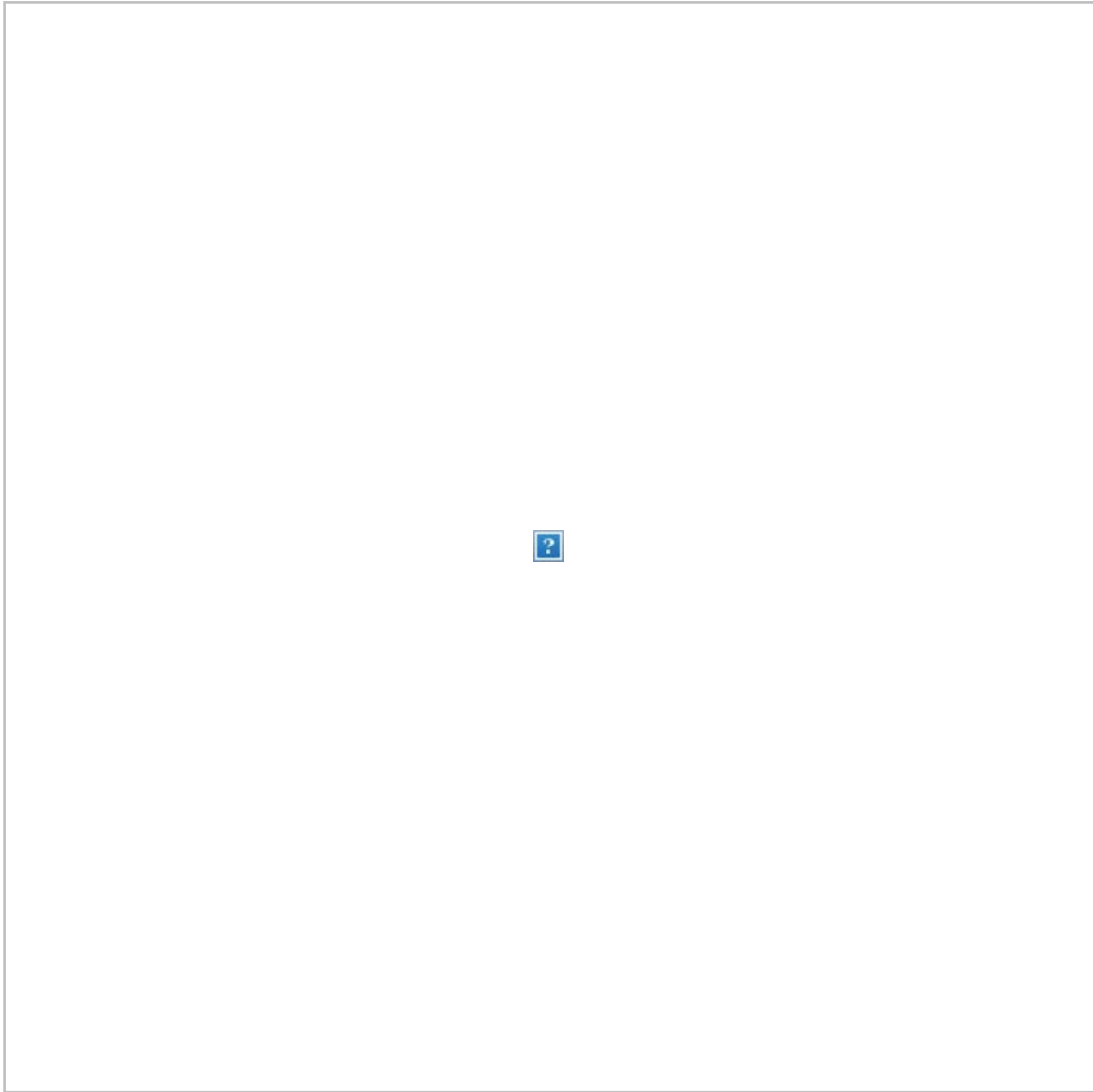
place barring successful legal challenges. ... The two candidates were separated by less than 20,000 votes in the first election, with Raffensperger running slightly ahead. Democrats were unable to harness the energy that they had during the November election, however, and Raffensperger led by more than four points Tuesday with 98 percent of precincts reporting. **Turnout appeared to be only about a third of the November number.**"

**-- In another runoff, Little Rock elected an African American mayor, Frank Scott Jr., a 35-year-old banker who was formerly state highway commissioner.** The Arkansas capital has had two previous black mayors, but they were appointed by fellow members of the city council. ([KARK](#))

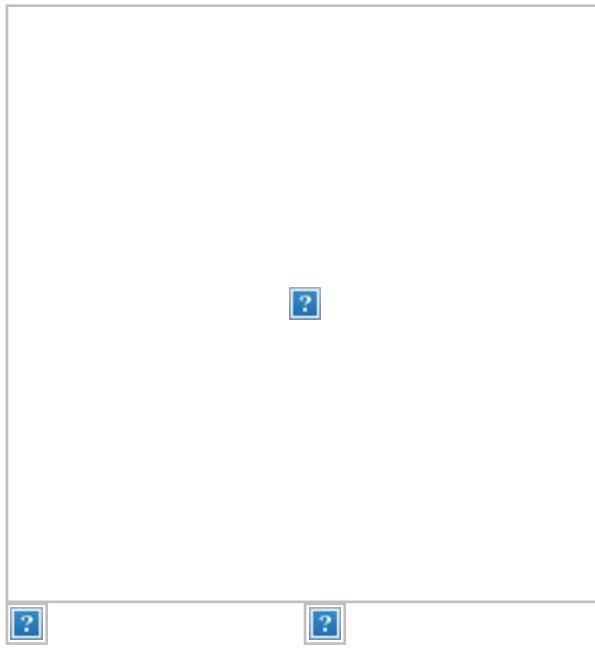
**-- The fate of the Weekly Standard — which has continued to critique Trump from the right long after most other conservative publications — is uncertain.** [CNN's Oliver Darcy reports](#): "The magazine's precarious position comes after its leadership spent months searching for a buyer ... However, [publisher] MediaDC recently informed The Weekly Standard's leadership that the company was no longer interested in a sale ... Instead, Ryan McKibben, the chairman of MediaDC, asked to meet with [Editor in Chief Stephen Hayes] in a meeting tentatively scheduled for late next week ... [He] also requested the entire staff of The Weekly Standard be made available following the meeting. That request,



coupled with MediaDC's Monday announcement that its other conservative news organization, The Washington Examiner, would be expanding its magazine into a weekly publication, has left The Weekly Standard's leadership worrying."



Trump International Hotel is seen in Washington. (Alex Brandon/AP)



## GET SMART FAST:

1. **The attorneys general of Maryland and D.C. have issued subpoenas to as many as 13 of Trump's private entities in their emoluments lawsuit involving Trump International Hotel.** The subpoenas seek information on which foreign governments have paid the Trump Organization, data the attorneys general hope will bolster their argument that the president is violating the Constitution by improperly benefiting from his office. ([Jonathan O'Connell, Ann E. Marimow and David A. Fahrenthold](#))
2. **France's nationwide protests are the latest backlash against taxes meant to fight climate change.** French President Emmanuel Macron's

decision to temporarily suspend a set of carbon taxes is another example of how politically unpopular such environmental policies can be. ([Steven Mufson and James McAuley](#))

3. **Many climate scientists and policy experts have become pessimistic about countries adopting proposals robust enough to slow the advancement of climate change.** At the U.N. climate conference in Poland, several major countries are expected to announce they have failed to meet the targets they set in Paris three years ago. ([Steven Mufson](#))
4. **The Justice Department charged four people with tax evasion in connection with the 2016 Panama Papers.** The indictment, centered on accusations that the people spent decades hiding tens of millions of dollars from the IRS, marks the first time U.S. officials have issued charges related to the Panama Papers. ([Devlin Barrett](#))
5. **A new report alleges Leslie Moonves misled investigators and destroyed evidence during a probe into the sexual misconduct allegations against the former CBS CEO.** Lawyers who conducted the inquiry said CBS had justification to deny Moonves his \$120 million severance after he “engaged in multiple acts of serious nonconsensual

sexual misconduct in and outside of the workplace, both before and after he came to CBS in 1995.” ([New York Times](#))

6. **Nikki Haley plans to stay in New York and work on a second book after stepping down as U.N. ambassador.** The former South Carolina governor said she would return to the state, where she recently sold her home, after her son finishes high school. ([Charleston Post and Courier](#))
7. **A West Palm Beach, Fla., trial that was expected to include testimony from women who have accused billionaire Jeffrey Epstein of sexual abuse was settled moments before it was supposed to begin.** Epstein apologized for making “false and hurtful allegations” against Bradley Edwards, the attorney for some of Epstein’s accusers. Epstein had claimed Edwards ginned up the sexual molestation accusations as part of a fundraising scheme. ([Lori Rozsa](#))
8. **Interest in becoming a police officer is on the decline across the United States.** In Seattle, where the starting salary is \$79,000, applications have dropped by nearly 50 percent. And departments are struggling to retain new officers, some of whom leave after less than a year. ([Tom Jackman](#))



Bob Dole stands to pay respect to George H.W. Bush

## **BUSH 41 REMEMBERED:**

**-- Mourners gathered at the Capitol to honor George H.W Bush before his funeral today at Washington National Cathedral. [Marc Fisher, Marissa J. Lang and Elise Viebeck report](#):** “They came to attention as World War II veterans, including former senator Bob Dole, who rose from his wheelchair, jaw quivering, to deliver a quick, crisp salute. Mostly, they offered a final

farewell to George Herbert Walker Bush as fellow Americans, eager to honor decency, moderation and a commitment to making things work, all of which he embodied. The Capitol Rotunda was open to all Tuesday, and they came in a manner befitting the 41st president — not in huge numbers, but steadily; with grace and seriousness of purpose; with nothing disparaging to say, but with a recaptured sense that, even now, we're all in this together.”

**-- Bush's funeral has created an informal reunion for former members of his administration who have gathered to celebrate his life.** [The New York Times's Peter Baker reports](#): “More than a quarter-century after the original Bush administration left Washington and nearly a decade after the departure of the second, the men and women who once ran the nation and, by extension, the world were back. On the eve of the state funeral for President George Bush, they caught up, shared stories and honored those no longer around. ‘Everybody’s a mixture of sad and joyful because we’re celebrating a great life,’ said Jonathan Bush, the younger brother of the 41st president and uncle of the 43rd.”

**-- The United States will recognize a national day of mourning today for Bush.** [From Kimberly Winston](#): “Flags will be at half-staff; federal offices and the stock market will be closed. Millions of people, here and abroad, are expected to watch a live broadcast of Bush’s

state funeral from Washington National Cathedral.”

**-- Bush’s death has sparked debates about his legacy on race issues.** [From Sean Sullivan](#): “During his first campaign for the Senate in Texas, [Bush] opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark law banning many forms of racial discrimination. But four years later, as a member of the House, he voted for watershed legislation making it illegal to refuse to sell or rent housing on the basis of race. When he ran for president two decades after that, Bush and his allies made an African American man convicted of murder and rape a central focus of his campaign’s effort to portray his opponent as weak on crime — stoking a controversy that [reemerged](#) in the racially charged atmosphere of this year’s midterm elections.”

**-- Trump’s use of a motorcade to visit George W. Bush at Blair House, which is 250 yards from the White House, triggered some light criticism.** [David Nakamura reports](#): “The Trumps spent 23 minutes visiting with Bush and his wife, Laura, by all accounts a cordial meeting in which the former president exchanged kisses on the cheek with the current first lady at the curb. ... The need for the motorcade, however, prompted questions, and a healthy dose of speculation, about why the Trumps were unable — or unwilling — to simply walk across the street. ‘Presidents, including the last one, have made the walk before,’ observed Edward Price, who served as

National Security Council spokesman in the Obama administration. ... [But in] her autobiography 'Becoming,' former first lady Michelle Obama wrote that the Secret Service sometimes requested she or her husband 'take the motorcade instead of walking in the fresh air' to Blair House for security reasons."



Graham: Saudi crown prince 'complicit' in Khashoggi murder

## **KHASHOGGI FALLOUT:**

**-- Contradicting assertions from Trump and members**



**of his Cabinet, Republican senators said a briefing from CIA Director Gina Haspel on the killing of Post contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi has convinced them of the Saudi crown prince's involvement.** [Shane Harris and Karoun Demirjian report:](#)

“ ‘There’s not a smoking gun — there’s a smoking saw,’ said Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), referring to the bone saw that investigators believe was used to dismember Khashoggi ... Armed with classified details provided by [Haspel], senators shredded the arguments put forward by senior administration officials who had earlier insisted that the evidence of [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's] alleged role was inconclusive. The gulf that has emerged between Republican lawmakers and the president over how to respond to the journalist’s killing appeared to widen after Tuesday’s briefing, with Graham, one of Trump’s closest Senate allies, announcing that he was no longer willing to work with the crown prince, whom the White House regards as one of its most important allies in the Middle East.

“In recent days, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have said that no single piece of evidence irrefutably links Mohammed to the killing. But the senators, in effect, said that did not matter, because the evidence they heard convinced them beyond the shadow of a doubt. **‘If the crown prince went in front of a jury, he would be convicted in 30 minutes,’ said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the chairman of the**

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee.** ... Graham leveled sharp criticism at Pompeo and Mattis, saying he thought they were 'following the lead of the president.' He called them 'good soldiers.' "

**-- The GOP senators essentially accused Trump of helping Saudi Arabia try to cover up the killing.** [From Aaron Blake](#): "Graham said Tuesday that you'd have to be 'willfully blind' to not know Mohammed was 'intricately involved' — a clear rebuke of Trump's argument that this whole thing resides in some kind of gray area. ... **'If they were in a Democratic administration,' Graham said of Pompeo and Mattis, 'I would be all over them for being in the pocket of Saudi Arabia.'** ... Corker also suggested that the briefing last week, which featured Pompeo and Mattis but not Haspel, was entirely misleading. When asked whether there was a difference in the message about Mohammed's culpability, Corker compared it to the 'difference between darkness and sunshine.' "

**-- Not all Republicans: A GOP congressman justified Trump's response to Khashoggi's killing by saying, "Journalists disappear all over the country."** [Felicia Sonmez reports](#): "[Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah)] echoed Trump, telling CNN's Brianna Keilar that 'no one can say' for certain what happened and maintaining that it is in U.S. interests not to allow the relationship with Saudi Arabia to rupture. 'We have to have a relationship with

some players that we don't agree with,' Stewart said. 'Journalists disappear all over the country. Twenty journalists have been killed in Mexico. You don't think it's happened in Turkey and China? Of course it does. And yet, we have to have a relationship with these individuals, or with these countries.' ”



'Tough' day for Wall Street as Dow plunges 799 points

## **THE TRADE WAR:**

**-- U.S. stock markets fell 3 percent as skepticism**

**grew of Trump's claims the United States and China reached a trade breakthrough during the G-20 summit.** "The reversals more than erased the tepid gains Monday in reaction to Trump's initial account of what he said were promises made by the Chinese government," [Damian Paletta, David J. Lynch and Josh Dawsey report.](#)

"Three days after Trump emerged from his dinner with [Chinese President Xi Jinping] touting an 'incredible' deal, U.S. and Chinese officials were offering different accounts of whether there was a 90-day deadline for progress in new trade talks, the schedule for China to increase its purchases of American farm and industrial products, and Beijing's plans to reduce or eliminate specific tariffs. **While Trump tweeted a day after the meeting that China would 'reduce and remove' tariffs on U.S. automobiles, his aides acknowledged privately Tuesday that China had made no such commitment. 'Nobody knows what the deal is,' said one top White House adviser** ... Late Tuesday in Washington, after doubts about the deal blew into the open and the market plunged, the Trump administration was able to take some solace from a Chinese Ministry of Commerce statement that acknowledged hopes of meeting a 90-day timetable. ...

**"In a series of Twitter posts Tuesday, the president threatened to slap additional import penalties on Chinese products if China did not make major changes in its economic relationship with the United**

**States.** ‘President Xi and I want this deal to happen, and it probably will,’ Trump wrote. ‘But if not remember, I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power.’ Tuesday night, the president bore down on the theme, tweeting: ‘We are either going to have a REAL DEAL with China, or no deal at all — at which point we will be charging major Tariffs against Chinese product being shipped into the United States.’ ”

**-- “Once again this week, world leaders, U.S. lawmakers and jittery investors have been reminded that Trump’s words cannot always be trusted,”**

[Damian Paletta and Philip Rucker write](#). “Global markets demand consistency and reliability, but Trump delivers neither. Instead, he makes knee-jerk announcements that surprise investors, lawmakers and even some of his own aides and advisers, who sometimes find themselves reversing course depending on the president’s whims.”

**-- China is secretly funding the creation of a new Boeing satellite that incorporates technology used by the U.S. military.** [The Wall Street Journal’s Brian](#)

[Spegele and Kate O’Keeffe report](#): “About \$200 million flowed to the satellite project from a state-owned Chinese financial firm in a complex deal that used offshore companies to channel China’s money to Boeing. ... Such technology would help fill in a missing piece of the puzzle

for China as it seeks to secure its status as a superpower alongside the U.S. It would bolster China's burgeoning space program, as well as initiatives to dominate cutting-edge industries and expand its influence in the developing world. A web of U.S. laws effectively prohibits exporting satellite technology to China, and its satellites lag far behind those made in America."



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, with the help of the Mary and Don Miller family from Plainfield, Wis., flipped the switch to light the Christmas tree in the State Capitol rotunda last night in Madison. (Steve Apps/Wisconsin State Journal/AP)

## **MORE MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- The National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's campaign arm, was the victim of a cyberattack during the 2018 election cycle. [Ellen Nakashima and Shane Harris report](#):** “It wasn’t known whether a foreign government was behind the intrusion into the computer networks of the [NRCC], a person familiar with the case said. But the intruder was ‘sophisticated, based on their tactics and methods,’ and the intrusion ‘was clearly designed to hide the tracks of who it was,’ this person said ... The committee discovered the breach in April, said a person familiar with the case. Officials conducted an internal investigation, contacted the bureau within days and ‘gave the FBI everything they asked for,’ the person said. ... **The NRCC intrusion bears similarities to the DNC breach in 2016.**”

**-- Wisconsin Republicans are moving forward with attempts to [limit](#) the power of incoming Democrats, despite public criticism and protests. [Dan Simmons and Felicia Sonmez report](#):** “By Tuesday evening, the Wisconsin Senate had passed the least controversial of the three lame-duck bills, a measure on taxes and transportation that was approved by the GOP-controlled chamber on a party-line vote. ... Among the more hotly debated parts of the plan are provisions that would limit

early voting, which has helped Democrats, and restrict the ability of Gov.-elect Tony Evers (D) to make appointments. ... Opponents of the plan, meanwhile, continued to demonstrate at the State Capitol, including at a Christmas-tree lighting presided over by Gov. Scott Walker (R).” **Just after midnight, Republicans [approved](#) a plan to lock in place a Medicaid work requirement, which Evers said he intended to roll back.**

**-- Incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) suggested Democrats may refuse to seat a North Carolina Republican whose election is being investigated for possible fraud. [Mike DeBonis reports](#):** “[Hoyer] made the comments to reporters Tuesday as North Carolina election officials investigate whether an operative working on behalf of Republican candidate Mark Harris illegally collected incomplete ballots from voters. Hoyer’s comments, and the increasing criticism from other national Democrats, represent a new threat to Harris’s candidacy — suggesting that even if his apparent narrow victory is ultimately certified by the state, Harris could be subject to a months-long process in the House to determine whether he is ultimately sworn in.”

**-- A Trump-appointed federal prosecutor who has repeatedly prosecuted noncitizens for voting now has jurisdiction over the North Carolina case. [HuffPost’s Sam Levine and Ryan J. Reilly report](#):** “[U.S.



Attorney Robert] Higdon's office also issued a broad subpoena request earlier this year for millions of voter registration applications and absentee ballots, which the North Carolina Board of Elections voted to quash. Under scrutiny, Higdon's office delayed the subpoenas until after November's election. Election officials are now investigating apparent irregularities with absentee ballots in the midterm race."

**-- Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) is launching a new political action committee to recruit Republican women to run for Congress. [John Wagner reports](#):**

"Stefanik, who served for two years as the first female head of recruitment at the National Republican Congressional Committee, announced the formation of her PAC, which she said will field female candidates in GOP primaries. That is at odds with the practices of the NRCC, which does not get involved in contests among Republicans. Rep. Tom Emmer (Minn.), the newly elected NRCC chairman, made that point in a story in Roll Call, telling the publication 'if that's what Elise wants to do, then that's her call, her right.' 'But,' he added, 'I think that's a mistake.' Stefanik fired back Tuesday on Twitter, sharing the Roll Call story and highlighting Emmer's quote. 'NEWSFLASH,' she wrote. 'I wasn't asking for permission.' " ([Read more](#) from Power Up's Jackie Alemany this morning.)



Watch Beto O'Rourke's full concession speech

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Scoop: Obama met with Beto O'Rourke as the former Democratic Senate candidate weighs a presidential bid.** [Matt Viser reports](#): "The meeting, which was held Nov. 16 at the former president's offices in Foggy Bottom, came as former Obama aides have encouraged the Democratic House member to run, seeing him as capable of the same kind of inspirational

campaign that caught fire in the 2008 presidential election. The meeting was the first sign of Obama getting personally involved in conversations with O'Rourke ... TMZ, the Hollywood-based entertainment website, is now trailing O'Rourke; he is being swamped by calls from Democratic operatives eager to work for him, and other campaigns-in-the-making are eyeing his moves closely for any signs of his intentions. ...

**“O'Rourke was not among the slate of candidates that Obama endorsed during the midterm elections, but that came in part at O'Rourke's request.** Obama offered several times to help O'Rourke's campaign, including to come to Texas for a rally or to record robo-calls offering his endorsement. ... Obama even recorded a video that O'Rourke's campaign never utilized; it remained a subject of internal debate. O'Rourke ... hasn't forgotten his 2012 congressional campaign, when Obama — as well as another former president, Bill Clinton — endorsed his opponent, eight-term Democratic congressman Silvestre Reyes.”

**“Some of his closest friends ... expect (Beto) to run, with one of them putting 60-40 odds on his getting into the race.** O'Rourke has enlisted his longtime aide, David Wyson, to handle the barrage of incoming calls. But he has not made any commitments and has largely ignored requests coming from groups in the early-voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire eager to have him

visit.”

**-- Former Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick is expected to announce he will not pursue a 2020 run. [Politico's Natasha Korecki, Kyle Cheney and Stephanie Murray report](#):** “Patrick informed staff and advisers of his decision (yesterday), the sources say, with an announcement to come as soon as this week. A close ally of [Obama], the Democrat rejoined the private sector at Bain Capital after serving two terms as Massachusetts's governor. But he ramped up his political activity this fall in advance of a possible presidential bid, traveling to a handful of races across the country.”

**-- Stormy Daniels's attorney Michael Avenatti took himself out of the running for 2020. [John Wagner reports](#):** “ ‘I do not make this decision lightly — I make it out of respect for my family. But for their concerns, I would run,’ Avenatti said in a statement in which he did not detail the concerns. Avenatti said he would continue to represent Daniels ‘and others against Donald Trump and his cronies and will not rest until Trump is removed from office, and our republic and its values are restored.’ ”

**-- The DNC is finalizing a 2020 primary debate schedule that will allow lesser-known candidates to share a stage with front-runners. [Michael Scherer reports](#):** “Chairman Tom Perez and his team have been meeting for months with 2016 campaign advisers and

other stakeholders to find a way to improve the debate process, while accommodating the unusually large class of credible potential candidates, which could number more than 20 by spring. Perez has made clear to his staff that he would like the field to be presented in a way that initially mixes top-tier candidates with lesser-known ones.”

**-- Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, another potential 2020 candidate who just finished his term as chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, is trying to block Joe Manchin from becoming the top Democrat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee over the West Virginia senator's views on climate change. [The Guardian's Ben Jacobs reports](#):** “In an email sent out to supporters, Inslee insists: ‘Senate Democrats must not allow Joe Manchin to become the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I need your help to stop this.’ While the Washington Democrat offers some praise for Manchin ... he adds: ‘But on climate, he’s simply wrong.’ ...The effort shows Inslee making an effort to appeal to [progressives] as a potential ‘climate candidate’ if he chooses to run in 2020.”



Reporters swarm Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney at the White House. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

## **THE DOMESTIC AGENDA:**

**-- Mick Mulvaney has overseen a drastic curtailment of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's mission and oversight. [Robert O'Harrow Jr., Shawn Boburg and Renae Merle have an in-depth look at Mulvaney's tenure](#):** "One year after Mulvaney's arrival, he and his political aides have constrained the agency from

within, achieving what conservatives on Capitol Hill had for years been unable to do, according to agency data and interviews with career officials. Publicly announced enforcement actions by the bureau have dropped about 75 percent from average in recent years, while consumer complaints have risen to new highs, according to a Washington Post analysis of bureau data. Over the past year, the agency's workforce has dropped by at least 129 employees amid the largest exodus since its creation in 2010, agency data shows.

“Created by Congress to protect Americans from financial abuses, the bureau under Mulvaney has adopted the role of promoting ‘free markets’ and guarding the rights of banks and financial firms as well as those of consumers, according to statements by Mulvaney and bureau documents. ... The Senate this week is expected to confirm a new agency director, Kathy Kraninger, an associate director at the Office of Management and Budget, where Mulvaney splits his time as director. But Democrats have pledged to examine Mulvaney's tenure at the consumer protection bureau after they take control of the House in January.”

**-- The future of a multimillion-dollar contract to research new HIV treatments has been thrown into question over the Trump administration's opposition to the lab's use of fetal tissue. [Amy Goldstein reports](#):**  
“The turmoil over the National Institutes of Health contract

with the University of California at San Francisco is part of a building battle between conservatives opposed to research using fetal tissue and scientists who say the material is vital to developing new therapies for diseases from AIDS to Parkinson's. ... Last week, an NIH contracting official told the principal investigator at UCSF that the government was ending the seven-year contract midstream and that the decision was coming from the 'highest levels,' according to a virologist familiar with the events. Five days later, the university received a letter from the AIDS division of NIH's National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases saying the government would continue the contract for 90 days rather than the expected year-long renewal, with no forecast of its prospects after that."

**-- A government task force recommended ways to make the Postal Service more profitable, including reconsidering how e-commerce packages are priced.**

[Rachel Siegel reports](#): "But it did not go so far as to say the financially strapped Postal Service is losing money to Amazon, a company which contracts services from the Postal Service and that has consistently drawn Trump's ire. Even though the 70-page report does not specifically cite its contract with Amazon, it does recommend a reevaluation of the pricing for e-commerce packages and other non-essential mail shipped by companies such as Amazon." (Amazon.com chief executive Jeff Bezos also owns The Post.)



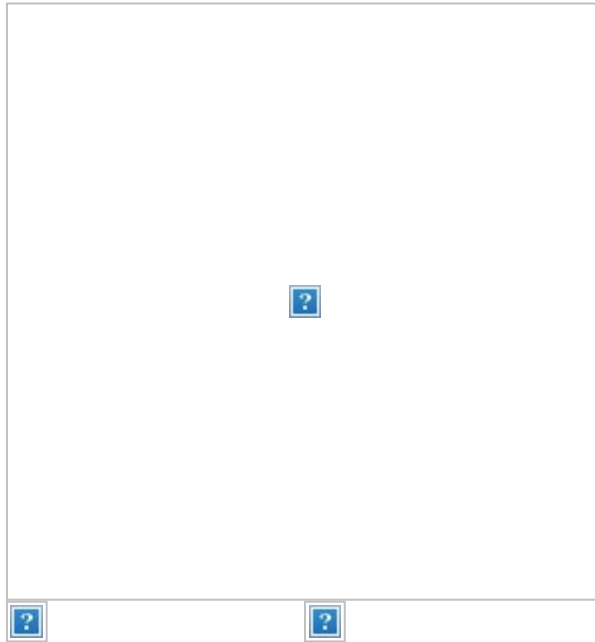
**-- Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) voiced confidence the chamber's criminal justice bill would pass "overwhelmingly" if Mitch McConnell allowed a vote on it.** [John Wagner reports](#): "Grassley said that he has met a target for support set by McConnell and that senators should take up the legislation by the end of the year, arguing that Republicans could even delay the confirmation of some judicial nominees to create more time. ... Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) ... said support among the 49-member Democratic caucus is 'solid,' though he stopped short of guaranteeing that every Democrat would vote for the bill. Grassley argued that waiting until next year would hurt the chances of passing the bill."

**-- A native-born U.S. citizen was held for weeks for potential deportation to Jamaica.** [Isaac Stanley-Becker reports](#): "[Peter Sean Brown] had been accused of a probation violation after testing positive for marijuana. But instead of returning home with a court date, or passing a few days in custody, Brown would spend weeks behind bars, battling his way through a labyrinthine immigration nightmare made all the more baffling by his citizenship."

**-- Google CEO Sundar Pichai's congressional testimony has been rescheduled for Dec. 11 because of George H.W. Bush's funeral.** The House Judiciary Committee is expected to question Pichai on

Republican allegations the search engine is unfairly biased against conservatives. ([Tony Romm](#))

## **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**



Trump touted his gentleman's agreement with Xi on Twitter this morning after the markets tanked yesterday:



The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee continued to criticize Trump for his tweets about Michael Cohen and Roger Stone:



Trump offered a message of "I told you so" to a European ally:



Meanwhile, BuzzFeed News's deputy director of breaking news mocked Trump's description of himself as a "Tariff Man":



The president and the first lady met a pair of their predecessors at the Blair House:



One of Bush 41's sons thanked Bob Dole after he stood from his wheelchair to salute the casket of his former political rival:



From a New York Times reporter:





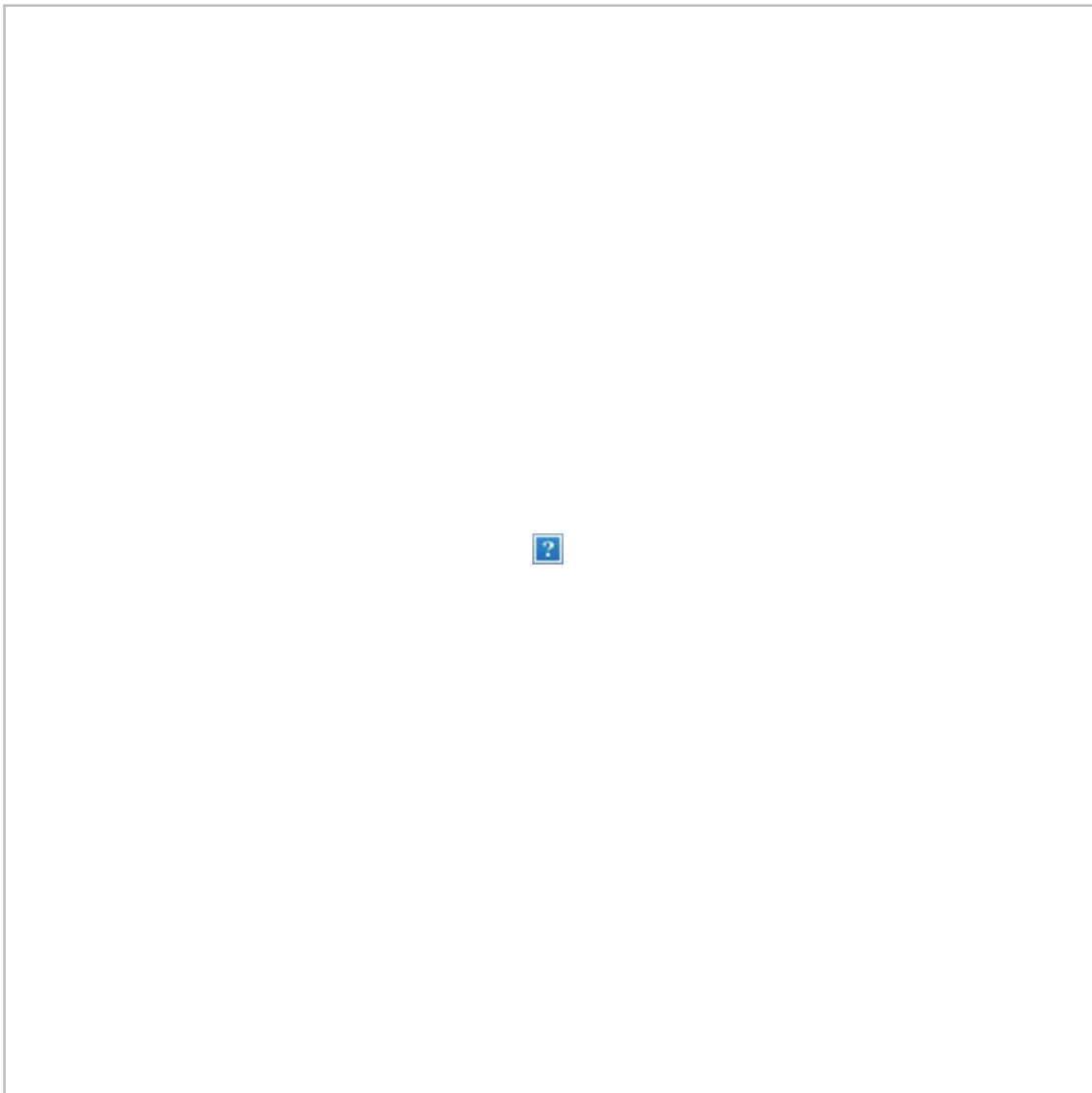
From an NBC News host:



Republican officials and lawmakers are at odds over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, per a CNN reporter:



Rudy Giuliani falsely blamed Twitter after a digital marketing director in Atlanta [purchased](#) an Internet domain to incorporate an anti-Trump message into Giuliani's tweet about the G-20 summit:

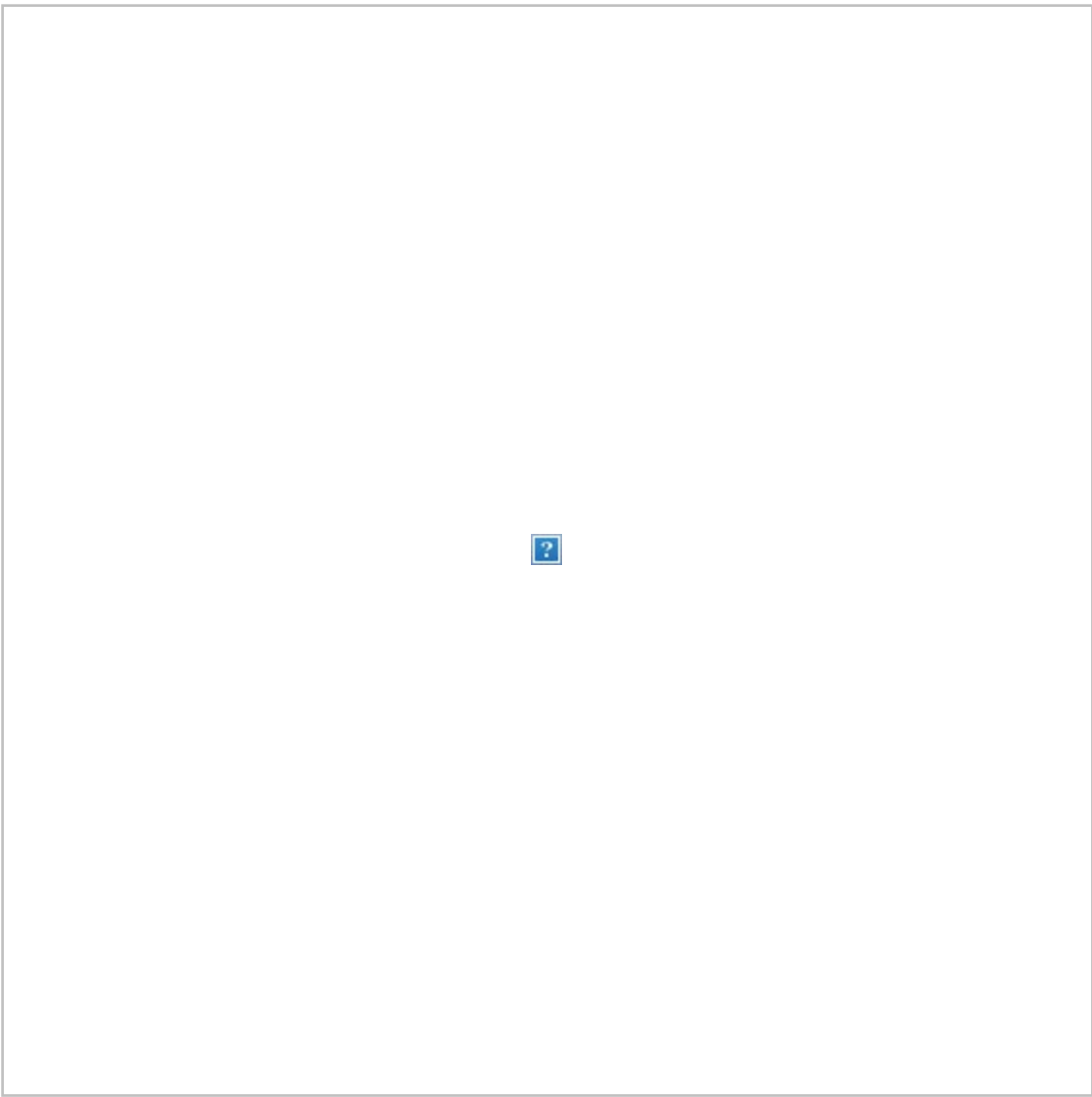


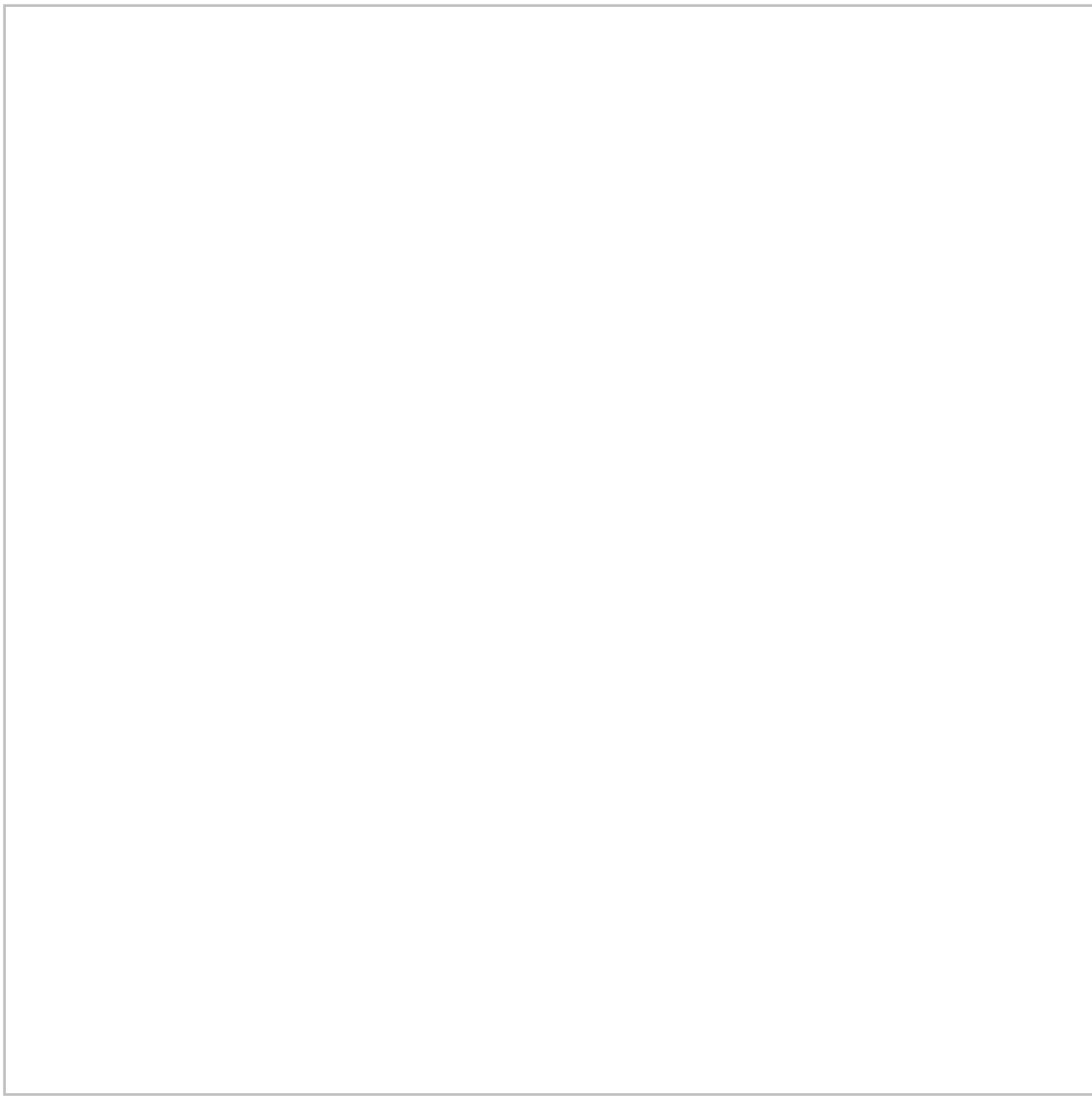
The Pentagon had a rather misleading typo in a statement on the troop deployment at the border, per a BuzzFeed News reporter:



(Defense officials quickly issued a correction.)

Wisconsin's Democratic senator spoke out against recent moves by the state legislature to limit the power of the incoming Democratic governor:





Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) continues to gain more support for her "Green New Deal":

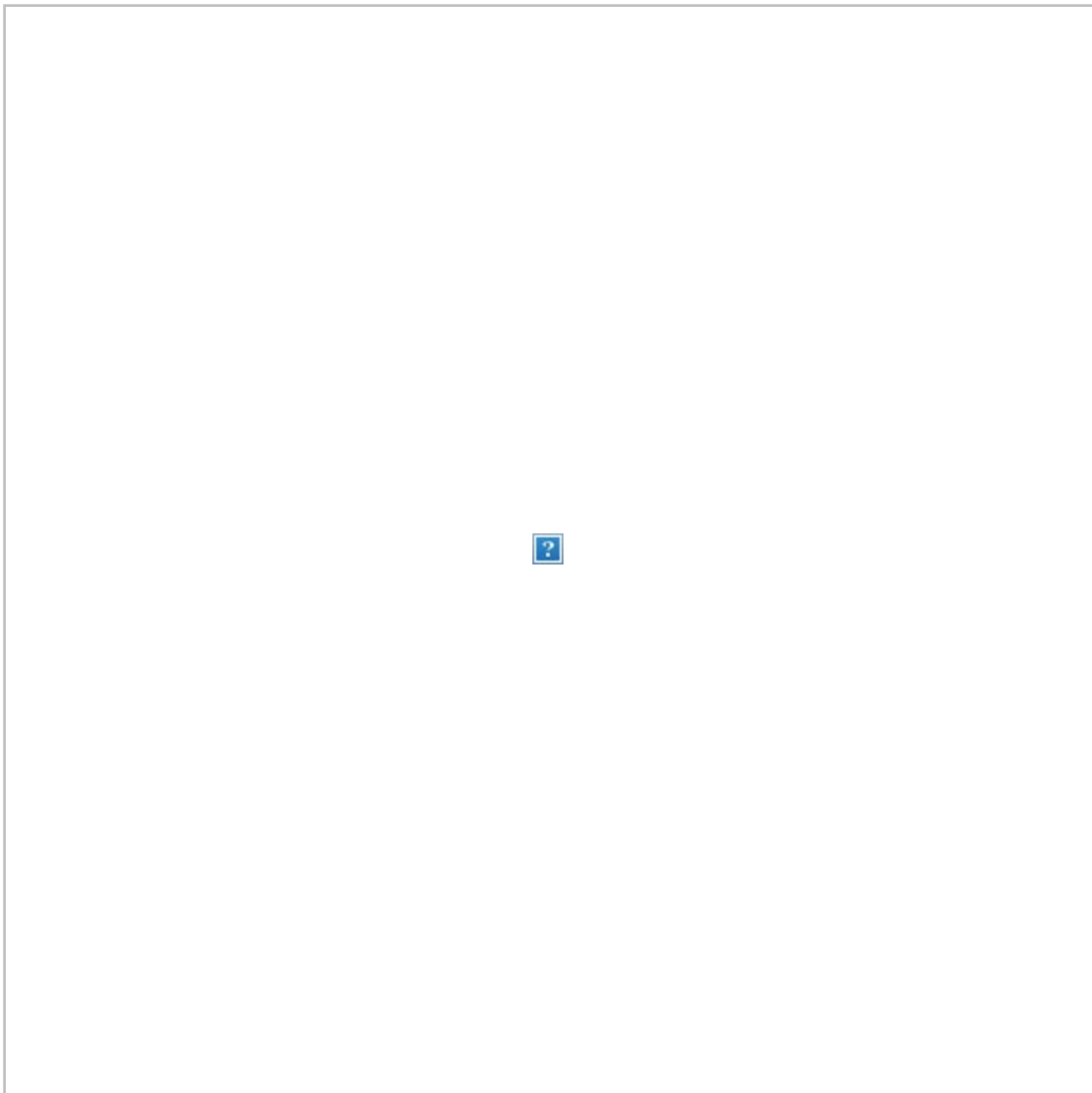


A House Democrat attacked Republican accusations of voter fraud as the investigation into North Carolina's disputed congressional race continues:





But a writer for The Fix noted this important distinction about the North Carolina race:



And this tweet from Barack Obama was the second-most liked tweet of 2018, according to Twitter's newly released data:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York Times, “ [‘Transactional’ Sex and a Secret Resignation Letter: Takeaways From a Report on Les Moonves](#),” by Rachel Abrams and David Enrich: “The outside lawyers were told by multiple people that CBS had an employee ‘who was ‘on call’ to perform oral sex’ on Mr. Moonves. According to the draft report: ‘A number of employees were aware of this and believed that the woman was protected from discipline or termination as a

result of it.' ... The report found that, in addition to consensual relationships and affairs, 'Moonves received oral sex from at least 4 CBS employees under circumstances that sound transactional and improper to the extent that there was no hint of any relationship, romance, or reciprocity.'"

-- The Atlantic, "[It's Almost Impossible to Be a Mom in Television News](#)," by Julianna Goldman: "According to a report by the Women's Media Center, television viewers are less likely to see women reporting the news today than just a few years ago. At the Big Three networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—combined, men were responsible for reporting 75 percent of the evening news broadcasts over three months in 2016, while women were responsible for reporting only 25 percent—a drop from 32 percent two years earlier. What could be contributing to this? Much has been written about anti-mom bias and the so-called motherhood penalty in industries from law to finance to tech. ... TV news is that and then some for working moms."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**" 'Damn Right, I'm a White Nationalist' Declares Texas GOP Platform Committee**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Sanders campaign drops \$300k on private jet travel," from [VT Digger](#):**

**Member,” from the Texas Observer:** “At the Texas Republican Party’s 2018 convention, Ray Myers was a part of a select group of activists charged with crafting the platform for the biggest and most influential state party in the country. Myers is also a white nationalist, a fact that he declared last week. ‘Damn Right, I’m a WHITE NATIONALIST and very Proud of it,’ Myers wrote in a Facebook post last Tuesday. Myers is a 74-year-old activist who has been involved in GOP politics for decades. But ‘the pivotal political moment came

“Sen. Bernie Sanders 2018 re-election campaign spent almost \$300,000 on private jet service for a recent cross country tour to stump for Democrats and test the presidential waters. According to federal campaign finance reports, Friends of Bernie Sanders, the senator’s official 2018 Senate campaign committee, spent \$297,685.50 with Apollo Jets, a private charter jet service headquartered in New York. The report does not break down the number of trips or where they were taken. ... Sanders came under criticism in 2017 after his

when Obama came on the scene. I knew immediately that America was in trouble,' he said in an Empower Texans profile.”

senate campaign spent a smaller amount with Apollo Jets — \$37,568. He was ridiculed for using a luxury service while criticizing the wealthy.”

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** and the first lady will attend the funeral of Bush 41 at the Washington National Cathedral today.

The president will also attend the Army-Navy Game on Saturday in Philadelphia, [Jake Russell reports](#).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“I have been at probably every powerful table that you can think of, I have worked at nonprofits, I have been at foundations, I have worked in corporations, served on corporate boards, I have been at G-summits, I have sat in at the U.N.: They are not that smart.” — Michelle Obama offering advice to young women on how to avoid self-doubt. ([Newsweek](#))



## **NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington could see flurries or even snow showers today.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “A bit of energy passing through the atmosphere could produce a few flurries or snow showers during the day. Can’t totally rule out a quick dusting if a heavier snow shower comes through. Otherwise we’re mostly cloudy and cold, with morning temperatures near 30 to the mid-30s, and afternoon highs stalling in the mid-30s to near 40.”

**-- The Capitals lost to the Golden Knights 5-3.**  
([Isabelle Khurshudyan](#))

**-- The Nationals have agreed to a deal with left-handed pitcher Patrick Corbin.** [From Chelsea Janes](#): “The terms of the deal are not yet known, though Yahoo and others have reported it is worth \$140 million and does include that ever-present Nationals' specialty — deferred money. The deal fills Washington’s most glaring hole, providing a proven arm behind Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg.”

**-- The Office of Congressional Ethics found that outgoing Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-Va.) and his wife**

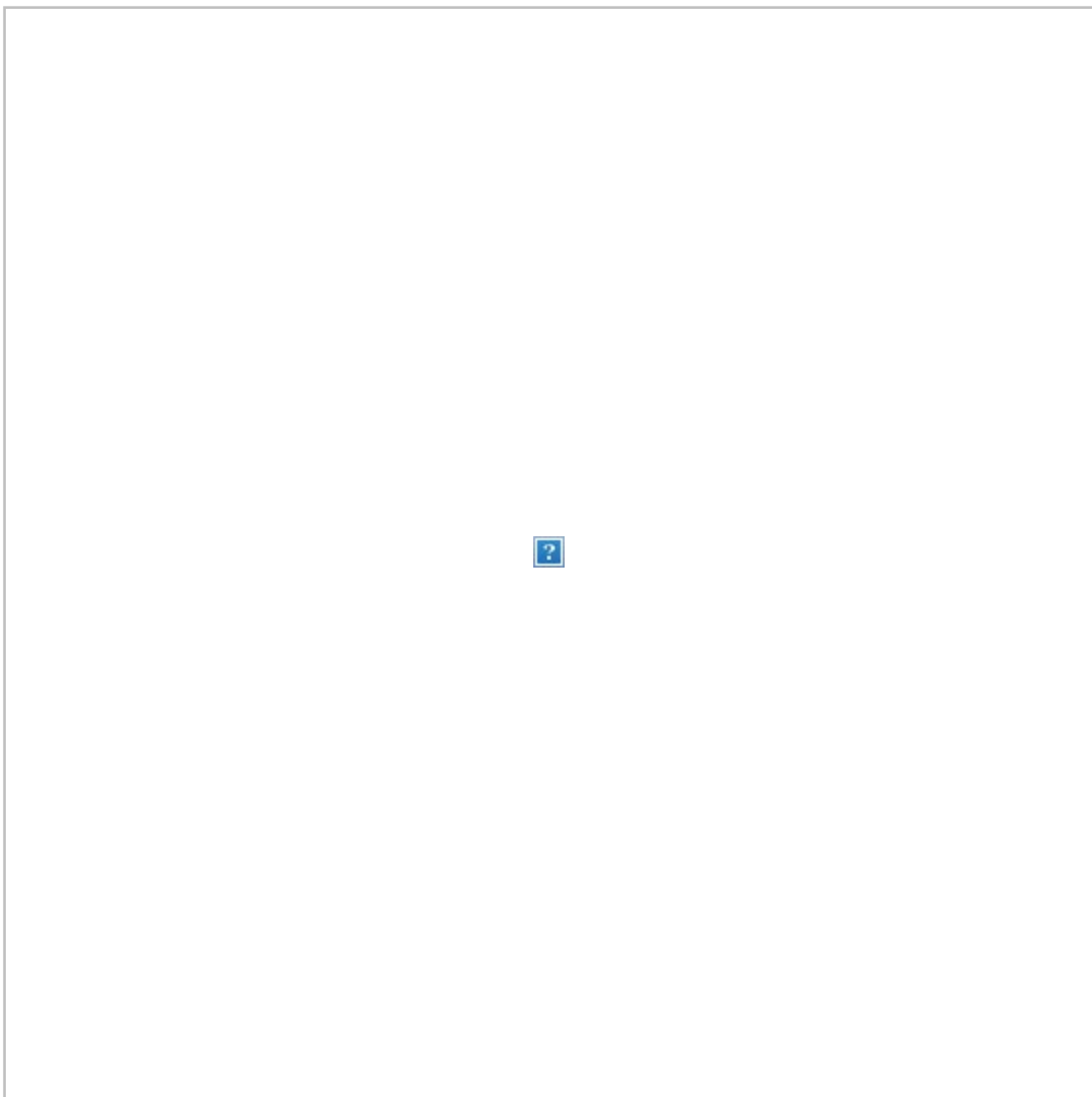
**had congressional staffers perform their personal errands.** [Jenna Portnoy reports](#): “The report found insufficient evidence for the claim that Garrett paid an employee out of his campaign coffers to do personal errands. ... On at least two occasions, Garrett or his wife asked a staff member to change the oil in the congressman’s car. A staffer went to Ikea and Costco with his wife, Flanna Garrett, during the workday. Staffers also frequently fed and walked the congressman’s dog, which was often present in the congressional office, and cared for the dog on their personal time.”

**-- The D.C. Council gave final approval to a bill decriminalizing Metro fare evasion.** [Faiz Siddiqui reports](#): “The measure passed amid staunch opposition from Metro and its board, which argued the transit agency loses more than \$25 million a year to fare evasion and that lessening the penalties for such an offense would only exacerbate the problem and lead to more crime. Council members and activists rejected that line of argument and said decriminalizing the act was an important step toward addressing disproportionate policing of African Americans on the transit system.”

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

This clip of Flynn chanting “lock her up” at the Republican National Convention really didn’t age well:



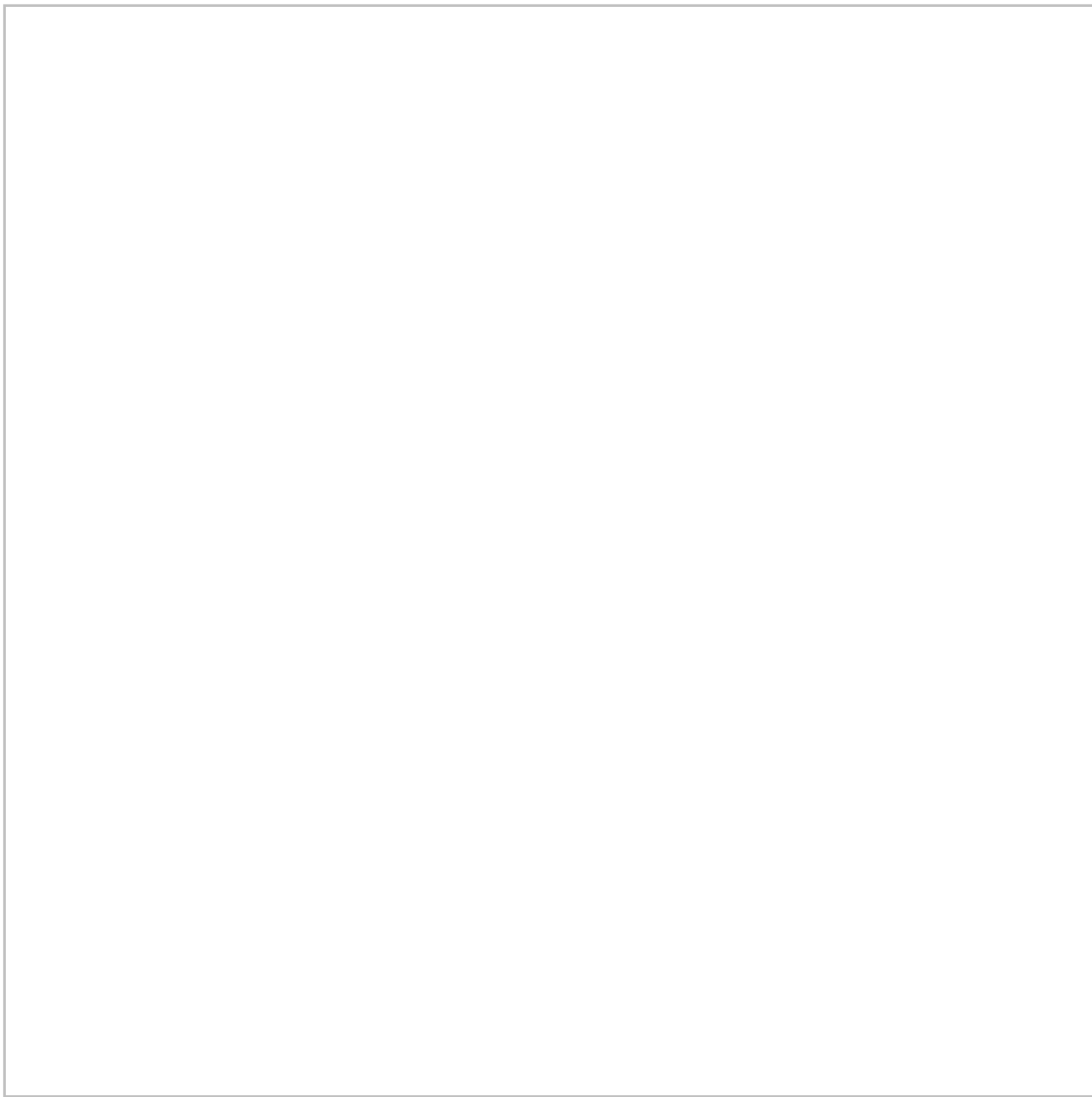


Michael Flynn leads chants of 'lock her up' at Republican Convention

Late-night hosts mocked Trump's self-description as  
"Tariff Man":

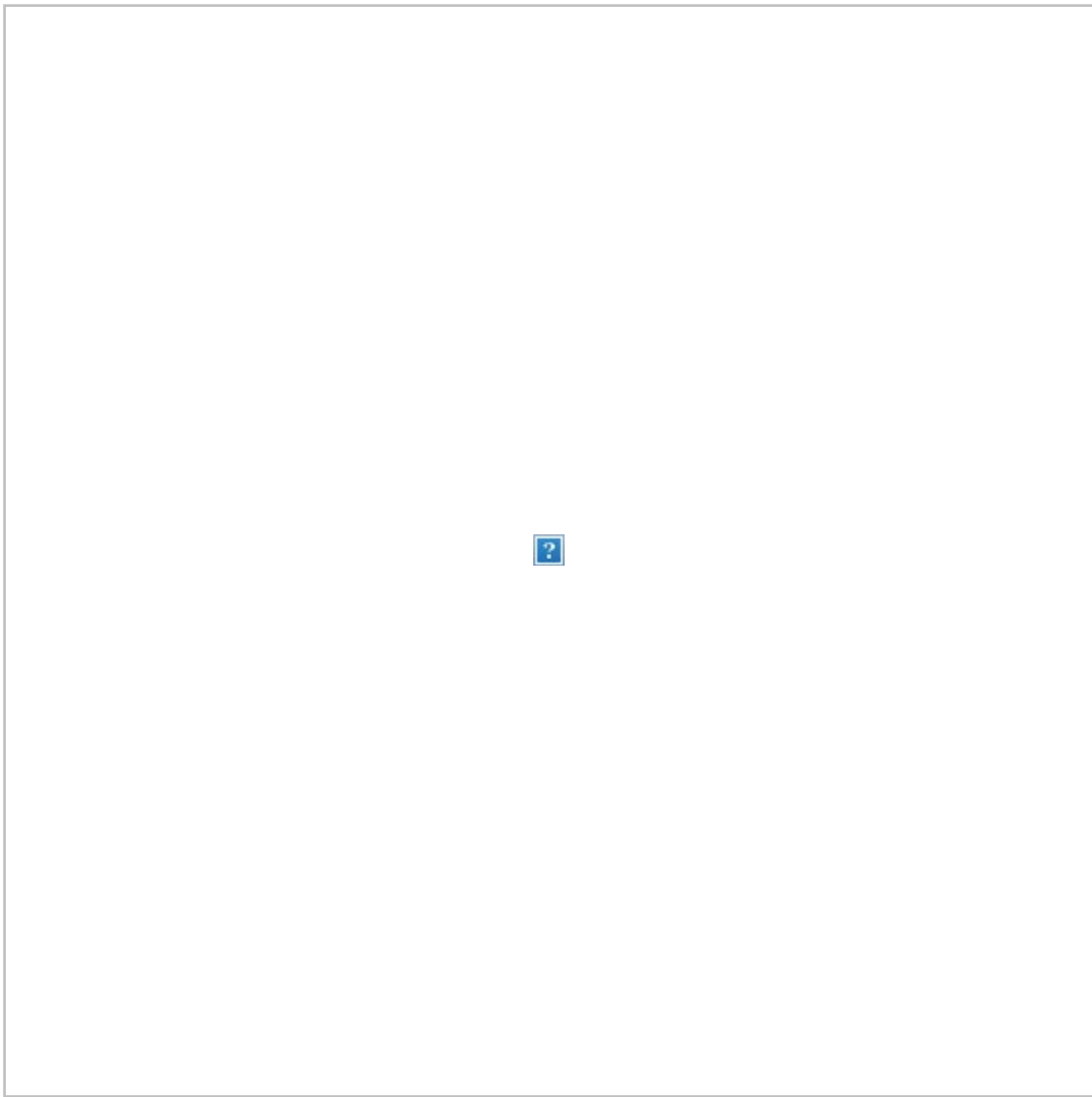


Tariff Man Is Going to be Angry About French Fries



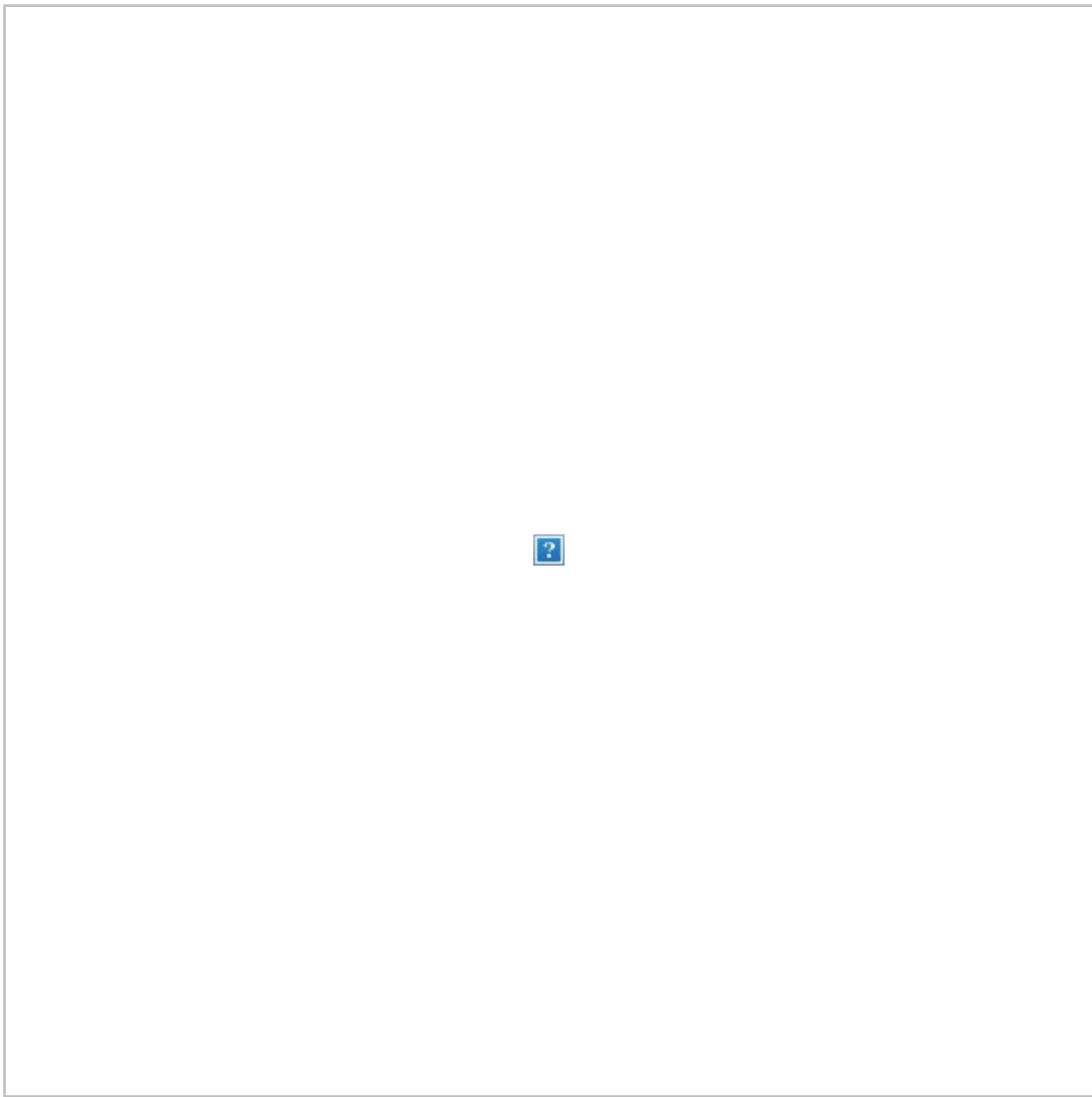
Tariff Man May Have Spoken Too Soon

**Bush's service dog, Sully, visited his casket at the Capitol:**



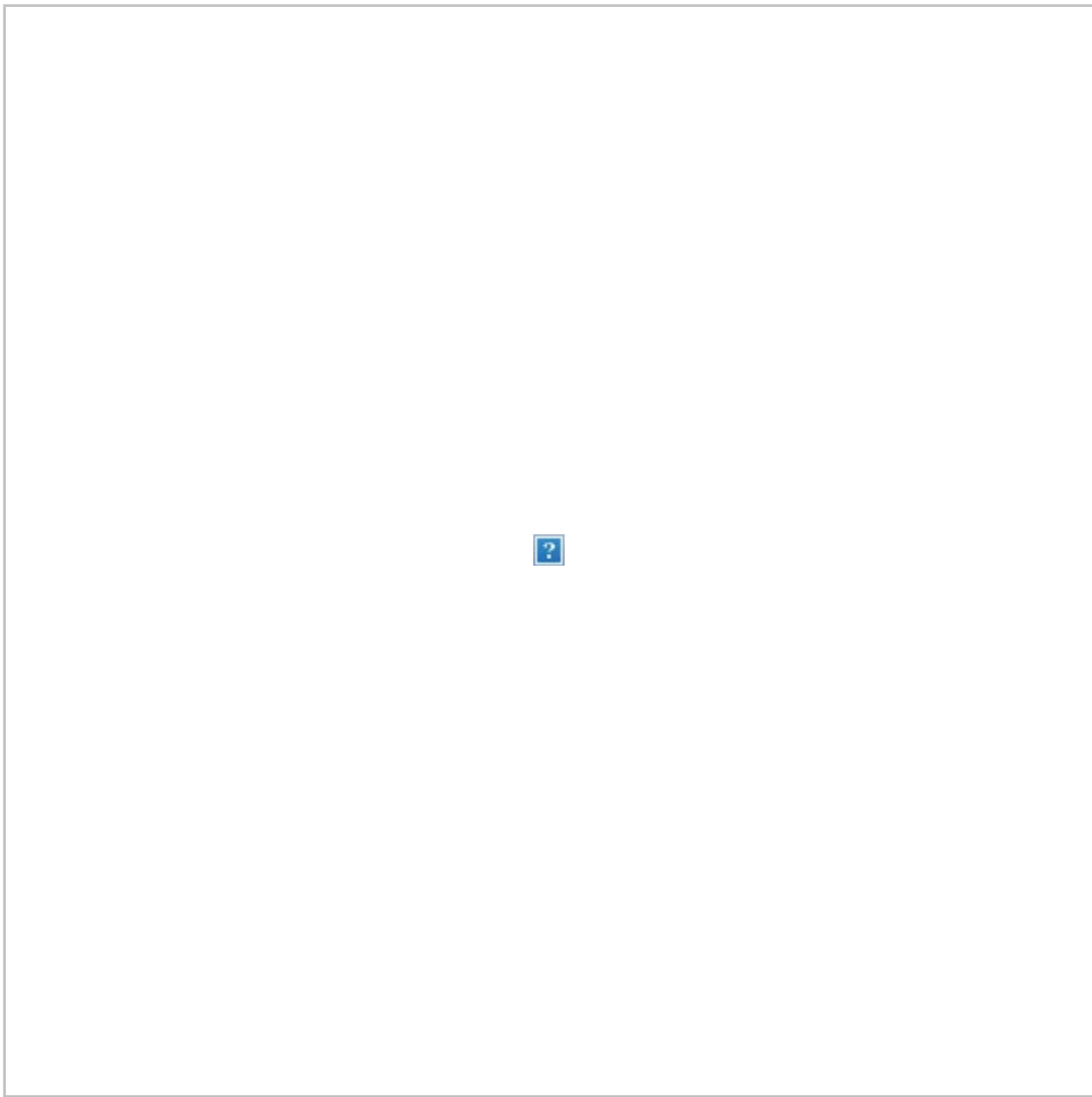
Bush's service dog Sully visits his coffin at the Capitol

The Post talked to the owner of Bush's favorite Houston restaurant to find out how he remembered the former president, a loyal customer for more than 35 years:



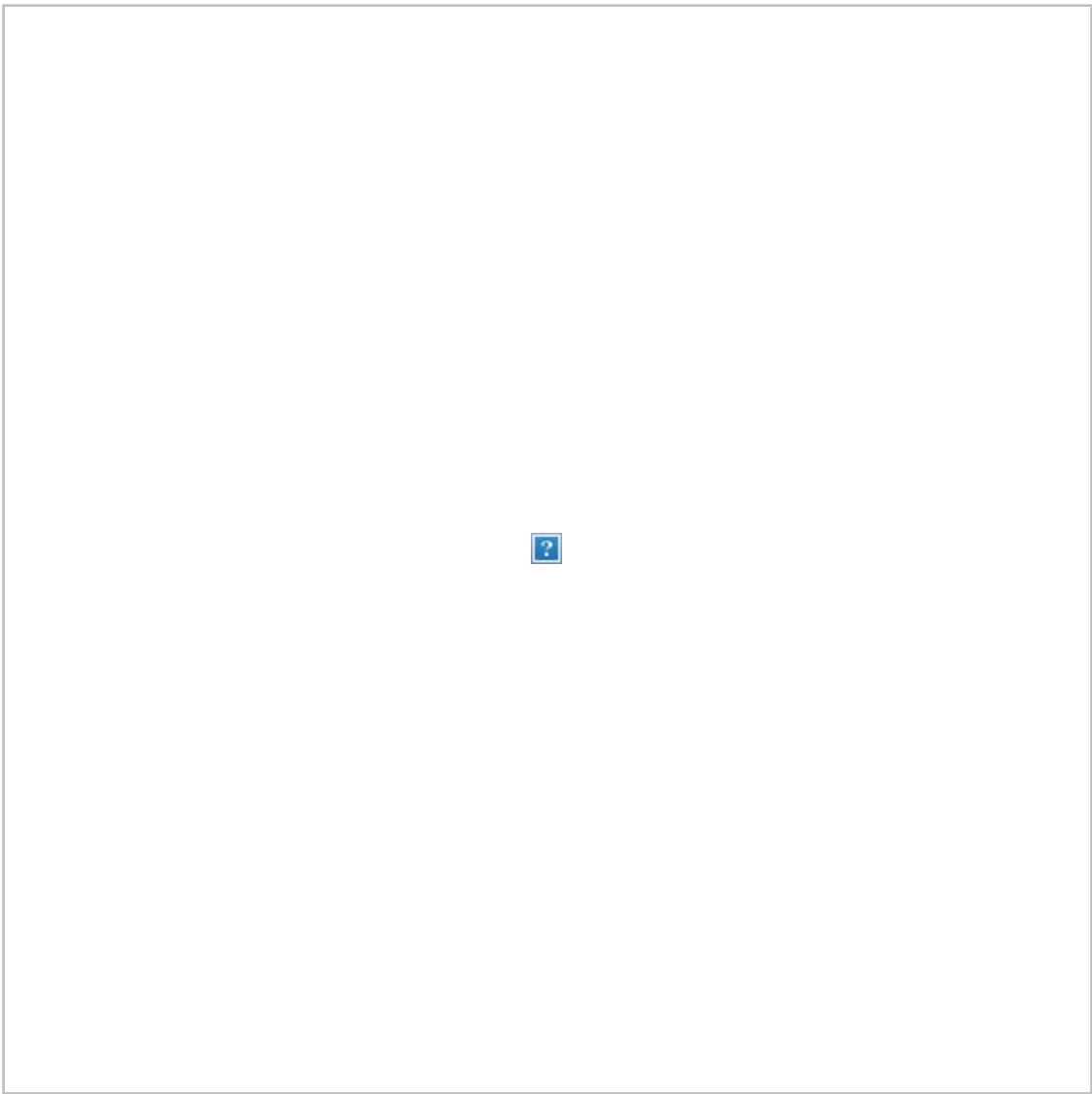
'Part of our family': How Bush's favorite Houston restaurant remembers him

The Fact Checker [outlined](#) how Trump has spun government data to present the best possible picture:



How President Trump twists government data to suit the political moment

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Polish President Andrzej Duda shook hands "Predator-style" on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference:



Schwarzenegger and Poland's Duda shake hands 'Predator-style'

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**From:** [SANS AtRisk](#)  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Subject:** @RISK: The Consensus Security Vulnerability Alert: Vol. 19, Num. 22  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 9:16:30 AM

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**@RISK: The Consensus Security Vulnerability Alert**  
**May 30, 2019 - Vol. 19, Num. 22**

Providing a reliable, weekly summary of newly discovered attack vectors, vulnerabilities with active exploits, and explanations of how recent attacks worked

Archived issues may be found at <http://www.sans.org/newsletters/at-risk>

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**CONTENTS:**

- NOTABLE RECENT SECURITY ISSUES
  - INTERESTING NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECURITY COMMUNITY
  - VULNERABILITIES FOR WHICH EXPLOITS ARE AVAILABLE
  - MOST PREVALENT MALWARE FILES May 23 -30, 2019
- 

**TOP VULNERABILITY THIS WEEK: Another zero-day vulnerability exposed in Internet Explorer**

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<http://www.sans.org/info/213015>

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**TRAINING UPDATE**

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[SANS Charlotte 2019](#) | July 8-13

[SANS Pittsburgh 2019](#) | July 8-13

[SANS Columbia 2019](#) | Columbia, MD | July 15-20

[SANS Rocky Mountain 2019](#) | Denver, CO | July 15-20

[SANS San Francisco Summer 2019](#) | July 22-27

[DFIR Summit & Training 2019](#) | Austin, TX | July 25-August 1

[SANS Boston Summer 2019](#) | July 29-August 3

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#### NOTABLE RECENT SECURITY ISSUES

SELECTED BY THE TALOS SECURITY INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH GROUP

Title: **Vulnerability could allow JavaScript to be injected into Internet Explorer 11**

Description: Researchers uncovered another Microsoft zero-day vulnerability. One of the critical bugs could allow an attacker to inject a DLL into Internet Explorer 11. After the injection, the exploit opens a filepicker and an HTML page that contains JavaScript that executes in a lower security context. There is also a zero-day privilege escalation vulnerability in Windows Error Reporting.

Reference: <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/microsoft/poc-exploits-released-for-two-more-windows-vulnerabilities/>

Snort SIDs: 50183, 50184

Title: **Winnti malware now appears on Linux**

Description: A new variant of the Winnti malware has been spotted in the wild being exploited on Linux machines. The malware acts as a backdoor for attackers. There are two different files - a main backdoor and a library that can hide the malware's activity. Winnti's primary role is to handle communications and deploy other modules directly from the command and control (C2) server.

Reference: <https://www.scmagazine.com/home/security-news/malware/googles-chronicle-security-team-discovered-a-linux-version-of-the-winnti-malware-was-used-in-the-2015-hack-of-a-vietnamese-gaming-company/>

Snort SIDs: 50164 - 50167

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#### INTERESTING NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECURITY COMMUNITY

Title insurance company First American Financial Corp. leaked hundreds of millions of documents related to mortgage deals dating back to 2003.

<https://krebsonsecurity.com/2019/05/first-american-financial-corp-leaked-hundreds-of-millions-of-title-insurance-records/>

Hackers claim to have stolen the personal data of millions of Australian graphic design startup Canva's users.

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/australian-tech-unicorn-canva-suffers-security-breach/>

An estimated one million devices are still vulnerable to the wormable vulnerability that people are calling "BlueKeep," which Microsoft disclosed earlier this month.

<https://threatpost.com/one-million-devices-open-to-wormable-microsoft-bluekeep-flaw/145113/>

Snapchat pushed back on a report that some of its employees used privileged access to spy on some users.

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/snapchat-claims-of-employees-1/>

The U.S. charged WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange with 17 criminal charges for soliciting, receiving and publishing national secrets.

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/zoetillman/julian-assange-wikileaks-new-charges-us>

A phony, malicious app on the Google Play store that steals users' cryptocurrencies was downloaded more than 1,000 times before being removed recently.

<https://techcrunch.com/2019/05/23/cryptocurrency-stealing-android-app/>

Several lawmakers are upset that a former NSA hacking tool is behind several cyberattacks against American cities, most recently Baltimore. However, many researchers say it is on end-users to patch their machines and protect them from these kinds of vulnerabilities.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-cybersecurity-202/2019/05/28/the-cybersecurity-202-security-pros-divided-over-nsa-s-responsibility-for-baltimore-hack/5cec79771ad2e52231e8e80f/>

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## **RECENT VULNERABILITIES FOR WHICH EXPLOITS ARE AVAILABLE**

COMPILED BY THE QUALYS VULNERABILITY RESEARCH TEAM

*This is a list of recent vulnerabilities for which exploits are available. System administrators can use this list to help in prioritization of their remediation activities. The Qualys Vulnerability Research Team compiles this information based on various exploit frameworks, exploit databases, exploit kits and monitoring of internet activity.*

ID: CVE-2019-0708

Title: **Microsoft Remote Desktop Services Remote Code Execution Vulnerability**

Vendor: Microsoft

Description: A remote code execution vulnerability exists in Remote Desktop Services – formerly known as Terminal Services – when an unauthenticated attacker connects to the target system using RDP and sends specially crafted requests. This vulnerability is pre-authentication and requires no user interaction. An attacker who successfully exploited this vulnerability could execute arbitrary code on the target system.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 10.0 (AV:N/AC:L/Au:N/C:C/I:C/A:C)

ID: CVE-2019-5519

Title: **Multiple VMware Products Local Code Execution Vulnerability**

Vendor: VMware

Description: Multiple VMware products are exposed to a local code execution vulnerability. Successfully exploiting this issue allows attackers to execute arbitrary code in the context of the affected application. Exploitation of this issue requires an attacker to have access to a virtual machine with a virtual USB controller present. This issue may allow a guest to execute code on the host.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 7.2 (AV:L/AC:L/Au:N/C:C/I:C/A:C)

ID: CVE-2016-10245

Title: **Doxygen Cross Site Scripting Vulnerability**

Vendor: Doxygen

Description: Doxygen is exposed to a cross site scripting vulnerability. An attacker may leverage this issue to execute arbitrary script code in the browser of an unsuspecting user in the context of the affected site. This may allow the attacker to steal cookie based authentication credentials and launch other attacks. Insufficient sanitization of the query parameter in templates/html/search\_opensearch.php could lead to reflected cross site scripting or iframe injection.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 4.3 (AV:N/AC:M/Au:N/C:N/I:P/A:N)

ID: CVE-2019-5960

Title: **WordPress WP Open Graph Plugin Cross Site Request Forgery Vulnerability**

Vendor: WordPress

Description: The WP Open Graph Plugin for WordPress is exposed to a cross-site request-forgery vulnerability. An attacker can exploit this issue to perform certain unauthorized actions and gain access to the affected application. WP Open Graph plugin for WordPress is vulnerable to cross site request forgery, caused by improper validation of user supplied input. By persuading an authenticated user to visit a malicious Web site, a remote attacker could send a malformed HTTP request. An attacker could exploit this vulnerability to perform cross site scripting attacks, Web cache poisoning, and other malicious activities.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 5.0 (AV:N/AC:L/Au:N/C:N/I:P/A:N)

ID: CVE-2019-10320

Title: **Jenkins Credentials Plugin Information Disclosure Vulnerability**

Vendor: Jenkins

Description: Credentials Plugin for Jenkins is exposed to an information disclosure vulnerability. An attacker can exploit this issue to gain access to sensitive information that may aid in further attacks. Jenkins Credentials Plugin 2.1.18 and earlier allowed users with permission to create or update credentials to confirm the existence of files on the Jenkins master with an attacker-specified path, and obtain the certificate content of files containing a PKCS#12 certificate.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 4.0 (AV:N/AC:L/Au:S/C:P/I:N/A:N)

ID: CVE-2019-3397

Title: **Atlassian Bitbucket Server Directory Traversal Vulnerability**

Vendor: Atlassian

Description: Atlassian Bitbucket Server is exposed to a directory-traversal vulnerability because it fails to sufficiently sanitize user-supplied input. An attacker can exploit this issue using directory traversal characters ('../') to access, write or read arbitrary files that contain sensitive information or to access files outside of the restricted directory to obtain sensitive information and execute arbitrary code. Atlassian Bitbucket Data Center could allow a remote authenticated attacker to traverse directories on the system, caused by improper validation of user request by Data Center migration tool. An attacker could send a specially crafted URL request containing "dot dot" sequences ('../') to write arbitrary files to arbitrary locations to execute arbitrary code on the system.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 9.0 (AV:N/AC:L/Au:S/C:C/I:C/A:C)

ID: CVE-2019-12295

Title: **Wireshark 'epan/packet.c' Denial of Service Vulnerability**

Vendor: Wireshark

Description: Wireshark is exposed to a remote denial of service vulnerability. An attacker can exploit this issue by injecting a malformed packet onto the wire or by convincing someone to read a malformed packet trace file.

In Wireshark, the dissection engine could crash. This was addressed in epan/packet.c by restricting the number of layers and consequently limiting recursion.

CVSS v2 Base Score: 5.0 (AV:N/AC:L/Au:N/C:N/I:N/A:P)

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## **MOST PREVALENT MALWARE FILES May 23 - 30, 2019**

COMPILED BY TALOS SECURITY INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH GROUP

SHA 256: 3f6e3d8741da950451668c8333a4958330e96245be1d592fcaa485f4ee4eadb3

MD5: 47b97de62ae8b2b927542aa5d7f3c858

VirusTotal:

<https://www.virustotal.com/#/file/3f6e3d8741da950451668c8333a4958330e96245be1d592fcaa485f4ee4eadb3/details>

Typical Filename: qmreportupload.exe

Claimed Product: qmreportupload

Detection Name: Win.Trojan.Generic::in10.talos

SHA 256: f08f4374674a8993ddaf89dcdf216bc6952d211763b8489366b0835f0eda1950

MD5: b9a5e492a6c4dd618613b1a2a9c6a4fb

VirusTotal:

<https://www.virustotal.com/#/file/f08f4374674a8993ddaf89dcdf216bc6952d211763b8489366b0835f0eda1950/details>

Typical Filename: maf-task.zip

Claimed Product: N/A

Detection Name: PUA.Osx.Adware.Gt32supportgeeks::221862.in02

SHA 256: c3e530cc005583b47322b6649ddc0dab1b64bcf22b124a492606763c52fb048f

MD5: e2ea315d9a83e7577053f52c974f6a5a

VirusTotal:

<https://www.virustotal.com/#/file/c3e530cc005583b47322b6649ddc0dab1b64bcf22b124a492606763c52fb048f/details>

Typical Filename: Tempmf582901854.exe

Claimed Product: N/A

Detection Name: W32.AgentWDCR:Gen.21gn.1201

SHA 256: 15716598f456637a3be3d6c5ac91266142266a9910f6f3f85cfd193ec1d6ed8b

MD5: 799b30f47060ca05d80ece53866e01cc

VirusTotal:

<https://www.virustotal.com/#/file/15716598f456637a3be3d6c5ac91266142266a9910f6f3f85cfd193ec1d6ed8b/details>

Typical Filename: 15716598f456637a3be3d6c5ac91266142266a9910f6f3f85cfd193ec1d6ed8b.bin

Claimed Product: N/A

Detection Name: W32.Generic:Gen.22fz.1201

SHA 256: 7acf71afa895df5358b0ede2d71128634bfbb0e2d9deccff5c5eaa25e6f5510

MD5: 4a50780ddb3db16ebab57b0ca42da0fb

VirusTotal:

<https://www.virustotal.com/#/file/7acf71afa895df5358b0ede2d71128634bfbb0e2d9deccff5c5eaa25e6f5510/details>

Typical Filename: wup.exe

Claimed Product: N/A

Detection Name: W32.7ACF71AFA8-95.SBX.TG

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**To:** [Kaveh Tahvildary](#)  
**Subject:** Campaign To Ax Facebook's Zuckerberg From Board Grows  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 21, 2019 4:48:49 AM



## CYBERSECURITY & PRIVACY

Tuesday, May 21, 2019



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## Delegate's Ex-Atty Put Under Monitor After Nude Pics Plea

The former counsel of a U.S. Virgin Islands congressional delegate received new electronic monitoring orders from a D.C. federal judge on Monday as part of his supervised release conditions, following his 2018 conviction over posting nude pictures nabbed from her phone.

[Read full article »](#)

## LITIGATION

### Health Co. Beats Ex-Worker's Background Check Class Suit

A California federal judge has ended a proposed class action accusing a health care provider of obtaining background checks on job applicants without properly informing them, saying the former employee behind the case should have filed it sooner.

[Read full article »](#)

### Cybersecurity Co. Sued Over Jacobs' Planned \$815M Deal

A stockholder hit KeyW with a proposed class action in Maryland federal court Friday, alleging that the cybersecurity firm failed to disclose key details about its planned \$815 million acquisition by Texas-based Jacobs Engineering.

[Read full article »](#)

### US Gives No Right To Wilderness, DOJ Says In Climate Suit

The federal government has asked an Oregon federal judge to toss a lawsuit alleging that U.S. citizens have a constitutional right to privacy in the wilderness that's been violated by climate change-inducing fossil fuel, agriculture and forestry policies.

[Read full article »](#)

### Drug Dogs Not Enough To Justify Searches In Pot-Legal Colo.

The Colorado Supreme Court held on Monday that police need probable cause to believe there are illegal drugs present before they deploy drug-sniffing dogs, saying the fact that cannabis is legal in Colorado means that an alert from a dog trained to sniff out pot isn't enough for a legal search.

[Read full article »](#)

### Caremark Inks Deal To End Case Over HIV Status Disclosures

Caremark has told an Ohio federal court that it inked a tentative deal to resolve a proposed class action accusing it of divulging the protected health information of 6,000 Ohio residents by mailing letters in envelopes that revealed names and references to HIV diagnoses.

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## EXPERT ANALYSIS

### Apple Credit Card's Legal And Ethical Implications For Fintech

Security advocates generally agree that the Apple Card — Apple's foray into

The Law Offices of Neal Brickman  
Vinson & Elkins  
Weinberg Gonser  
WhatleyKallas  
White & Case  
Wiley Rein

## COMPANIES

Aetna Inc.  
Altaba Inc.  
American Bar Association  
American Federation of State,  
County and Municipal Employees  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Apple Inc.  
Bank of America Corp.  
BlackRock Inc.  
BuzzFeed Inc.  
CVS Health Corp.  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Columbia Sportswear Co.  
Consumer Watchdog  
Equinox Holdings Inc.  
Expedia Inc.  
Experian  
Facebook  
Financial Industry Regulatory  
Authority Inc.  
Goldman Sachs Group Inc.  
Guggenheim Partners LLC  
Hot Topic, Inc.  
Illumina Inc.  
Instagram Inc.  
Institutional Shareholder Services  
Inc.  
International Business Machines  
Corp.  
Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.  
Johnson & Johnson  
National Association of Attorneys  
General  
New York City Bar Association  
Practising Law Institute  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
State Bar of California  
State Bar of Texas  
Tesla Inc.  
The KeyW Holding Corp.  
TripAdvisor Inc.  
Twitter Inc.  
United States Telecom Association  
Verizon Communications Inc.  
Voya Financial Inc.  
Washington Post Co.  
Yahoo! Inc.



the credit card industry, slated for this summer — will be safer than typical credit card transactions, but some privacy and consumer liability concerns do exist, say Aaron Swerdlow of Weinberg Gonser and Joel Sherwin of Neopay.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Directors Must Heed SEC On Cybersecurity And Social Media**

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has made clear that it expects companies to take action to avoid and remediate cybersecurity breaches, and to carefully review information disclosed via social media. But many officers and directors remain underprepared for SEC enforcement in these areas, say attorneys at Vinson & Elkins.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Union Of Tech, Life Sciences And Health Care Is Here To Stay**

The growing number of high-profile convergence deals between life sciences, health care and technology companies is creating both opportunities and challenges for the business and legal professionals who implement such complex arrangements, say attorneys at Goodwin.

[Read full article »](#)

## **LEGAL INDUSTRY**

### **Chief Justice On Newest Colleague: 'A Very Hard Worker'**

At an event Monday, Chief Justice John Roberts had warm words for freshman Justice Brett Kavanaugh and explained why having a new colleague makes the remaining justices “behave better.”

[Read full article »](#)

### **Attys Should Get Credit For Diversity Efforts, Task Force Says**

Legal employers should credit attorneys for the time they devote to improving the pipeline of diverse talent into the profession the same way they offer credit for pro bono work, according to a New York City Bar Association task force report released Monday.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Ex-BigLaw Atty Launches Suit Over Nixed Lewdness Charge**

The former Hughes Hubbard partner charged last year with exposing himself in an Equinox steam room launched a \$10 million defamation and negligence suit on Monday in New York state court against the gym and his accuser, saying the allegations have continued to damage his reputation even after the case was dropped.

[Read full article »](#)

### **DOJ Names Ex-US Atty Investigated For In-Office Affair**

The name of a former U.S. attorney in Illinois who retired while under investigation for having an affair with a subordinate has been released by the U.S. Department of Justice, which produced the information following a protracted legal fight with BuzzFeed News.

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### **Jones Day Seeks To Unmask Jane Doe Attys In Sex Bias Suit**

Jones Day is looking to identify the former associates behind a \$200 million pregnancy and gender discrimination suit against the firm, arguing Monday that the women haven't demonstrated sufficient grounds or evidence to hide their identities from the public.

[Read full article »](#)

### **White & Case Names Chair To A Fourth Term**

Global powerhouse White & Case LLP has reelected its chairman, New York-based Hugh Verrier, who has already helmed the firm for the past 12 years, the firm announced Monday.

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## **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

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[Ohio Department of Health](#)

[Securities and Exchange Commission](#)

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[U.S. Department of Justice](#)

[U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

[U.S. Supreme Court](#)

[United States District Court for the Southern District of New York](#)

## More Than Two-Thirds Failed Calif. Bar Exam In February

Less than a third of the aspiring attorneys who took the California bar exam in February passed the test, marking the second-lowest pass rate in more than a decade, according to data released by the Golden State's bar association.

[Read full article »](#)

### Analysis

## Texas Bar, State AG At Odds In Post-Janus Fees Fight

The Texas attorney general is backing a constitutional challenge to the State Bar of Texas' requirement that lawyers join the organization and pay dues, a move that has roiled the bar and caused a stir among lawyers in the state.

[Read full article »](#)

### Interview

## 15 Minutes With Columbia Sportswear's General Counsel

Columbia Sportswear general counsel Peter Bragdon took part in the company's decision to advocate for reopening the national parks during the most recent government shutdown, one effort that demonstrated how his duties often transcend legal strategy. Here, he shares how he views a general counsel's role in corporate responsibility and how disruptive politics affects his business.

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Company Confidential  
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#### **Patent Attorney - Data Privacy**

Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear, LLP  
-, -

#### **Technology Transactions & Privacy Associate Attorney - Mid level**

Perkins Coie LLP  
Washington, District of Columbia

#### **NYC\*Corp\*Assoc\*Mid-sized\*Lifestyle**

Schoen Legal Search  
NYC, New York

#### **Mid-sized White Plains firm seeks mid- senior litigation associate**

KLR Davis  
White Plains, New York

#### **Immigration Attorney**

Howard & Howard  
Chicago, Illinois

#### **T&E partner for North NJ office of NY mid- sized firm**

Schoen Legal Search  
Hackensack, New Jersey

#### **CT IP or Patent Partner tired of commuting to NYC**

Schoen Legal Search  
Stamford, Connecticut

#### **elite lit boutique // mid level assoc**

Schoen Legal Search  
New York, New York

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**To:** [Jolinda Murray](#)  
**Subject:** Hacking Charge Only Tip Of Iceberg For Wikileaks' Assange  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 5:08:13 AM



## CYBERSECURITY & PRIVACY

Friday, April 12, 2019



### TOP NEWS

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Top Congressional Democrats reiterated their demands Thursday for the

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release of the full report from special counsel Robert Mueller in a letter to Attorney General William Barr, calling for all of the underlying evidence from the probe in advance of its imminent release.

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At the SEC Speaks conference this week, leadership and staff from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission showcased last year's successes and outlined 2019 initiatives, providing practical guidance for practitioners before the SEC, say attorneys with Perkins Coie.

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### **Analysis**

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[Read full article »](#)

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Mayer Brown  
Mintz Levin  
Morgan Lewis  
Motley Rice  
Murphy Pearson  
Nixon Peabody  
Nutter McClennen  
Orrick Herrington  
Perkins Coie  
Robbins Russell  
Ropes & Gray  
Saul Ewing  
Silver Miller  
Skadden  
Tache Bronis  
Todd & Weld  
Vedder Price  
White & Case  
Wiley Rein  
Wilk Auslander  
Wilson Sonsini  
Young Conaway  
Zuckerman Spaeder

## **COMPANIES**

Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.  
Ameren Corp.  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Electric Power Co. Inc.  
Barclays Investment Bank  
Berkeley Research Group  
DTE Energy Co.  
Democratic National Committee  
Endo International PLC  
FirstEnergy Corp.  
Hertz Global Holdings Inc.  
Insurance Europe Ltd.  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Jefferies Financial Group Inc.  
Johnson & Johnson  
LinkedIn Corp.  
Morgan Stanley  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
National Consumer Law Center  
National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation  
New York Times Co.  
Nike Inc.  
Northeastern University  
Oppenheimer Holdings Inc.  
Pamplona Capital Management LLP  
PhishMe Inc.

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### **VIDEO: Ex-Skadden Partner Says, 'I Was Always Honest'**

Former President Barack Obama counsel and ex-Skadden star Gregory Craig took the highly unusual step Thursday of taking to Twitter and YouTube to defend himself against allegations of lying to the government about lobbying connected to Paul Manafort's efforts for the government of Ukraine.

[Read full article »](#)

#### **Analysis**

### **Trump's Sister Eschewed Family's Flash On 3rd Circ. Bench**

While her brother became known for gold-and-marble-bedecked buildings emblazoned with his family's name, attorneys say that Maryanne Trump Barry, the recently retired Third Circuit judge and elder sister of President Donald Trump, built a career in which she avoided the limelight and dedicated herself to circumspect and fact-driven rulings.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Avenatti Charged With Tax Evasion, Stealing From Clients**

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles announced a 36-count indictment against attorney Michael Avenatti on Thursday, adding to the legal woes of a provocateur who already faced embezzlement and extortion charges.

[Read full article »](#)

#### **Analysis**

### **Will The Newest Charges Against Avenatti End His Career?**

President Donald Trump's bombastic legal sparring partner Michael Avenatti is facing the end of his career and possibly substantial jail time thanks to Thursday's detailed federal indictment on fraud and tax evasion charges, the latest in a string of financial and legal troubles that have followed his star turn.

[Read full article »](#)

#### **Analysis**

### **'Varsity Blues' Judge Tough, Fair, And A Good Draw For Feds**

U.S. District Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton, the subject of a judge-shopping spat in the "Varsity Blues" case, is well-known around the Boston bar as a fair jurist, but one of the toughest on defendants and a potential delight for prosecutors.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Trump Defender, Ex-Wiley Rein Partner To Leave DOJ**

Brett Shumate, a former Wiley Rein LLP partner and one of the lead advocates tasked with defending President Donald Trump and his policies in court, revealed that he would be leaving the U.S. Department of Justice in a notice filed Thursday.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Dems Press Hunton On Ties To 'Secretive' Air Industry Group**

House Democrats on Thursday demanded information from Hunton Andrews Kurth and eight utility companies about their relationships with what the lawmakers blasted as a "secretive" front group devoted to rolling back air quality regulations.

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### **Hertz Wants Ex-GC To Cough Up Over \$70M In Clawbacks**

Hertz is looking to recover more than \$70 million in incentive pay and severance packages from former general counsel John Jeffrey Zimmerman and two other executives following their alleged roles in an accounting scandal from five years ago, according to a suit filed recently in New Jersey

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[State Farm](#)  
[Stifel Financial Corp.](#)  
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[European Commission](#)  
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federal court.

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### **Linklaters Ramps Up Flexible Work Offerings In The UK**

Magic Circle firm Linklaters on Thursday announced it has bolstered its flexible working policy in the U.K., expanding the privileges to any employee, without regard to seniority and without requiring staffers to spell out their reasons for seeking a change.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Law360's Weekly Verdict: Legal Lions & Lambs**

King & Spalding snatched this week's top legal lion spot after a jury found client Johnson & Johnson's talcum powder does not contain asbestos, while Morgan Lewis & Bockius was among the week's legal lambs with the Second Circuit reviving an employment suit against client Urban Outfitters.

[Read full article »](#)

### **CORRECTED: 3rd Circ. Revisits Del.'s Balance On Bench Rule**

A Third Circuit panel on Wednesday revisited a recent ruling that rejected Delaware's requirement that judicial applicants be registered Democrats or Republicans, though it kept the precedential decision largely intact. Correction: A previous version of this story mischaracterized the nature of the rehearing. The error has been corrected.

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Perkins Coie LLP

Washington, District of Columbia

#### **NYC\*Corp\*Assoc\*Mid-sized\*Lifestyle**

Schoen Legal Search

NYC, New York

#### **Immigration Attorney**

Howard & Howard

Chicago, Illinois

#### **Privacy Associate Attorney**

Perkins Coie LLP

Los Angeles, California

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Schoen Legal Search

New York, New York

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**To:** [Christina Handley](#)  
**Subject:** Hacking Charge Only Tip Of Iceberg For Wikileaks' Assange  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 4:59:12 AM



## CYBERSECURITY & PRIVACY

Friday, April 12, 2019



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Mayer Brown  
Mintz Levin  
Morgan Lewis  
Motley Rice  
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Nixon Peabody  
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Orrick Herrington  
Perkins Coie  
Robbins Russell  
Ropes & Gray  
Saul Ewing  
Silver Miller  
Skadden  
Tache Bronis  
Todd & Weld  
Vedder Price  
White & Case  
Wiley Rein  
Wilk Auslander  
Wilson Sonsini  
Young Conaway  
Zuckerman Spaeder

## **COMPANIES**

Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.  
Ameren Corp.  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Electric Power Co. Inc.  
Barclays Investment Bank  
Berkeley Research Group  
DTE Energy Co.  
Democratic National Committee  
Endo International PLC  
FirstEnergy Corp.  
Hertz Global Holdings Inc.  
Insurance Europe Ltd.  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
Jefferies Financial Group Inc.  
Johnson & Johnson  
LinkedIn Corp.  
Morgan Stanley  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
National Consumer Law Center  
National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation  
New York Times Co.  
Nike Inc.  
Northeastern University  
Oppenheimer Holdings Inc.  
Pamplona Capital Management LLP  
PhishMe Inc.



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### **VIDEO: Ex-Skadden Partner Says, 'I Was Always Honest'**

Former President Barack Obama counsel and ex-Skadden star Gregory Craig took the highly unusual step Thursday of taking to Twitter and YouTube to defend himself against allegations of lying to the government about lobbying connected to Paul Manafort's efforts for the government of Ukraine.

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#### **Analysis**

### **Trump's Sister Eschewed Family's Flash On 3rd Circ. Bench**

While her brother became known for gold-and-marble-bedecked buildings emblazoned with his family's name, attorneys say that Maryanne Trump Barry, the recently retired Third Circuit judge and elder sister of President Donald Trump, built a career in which she avoided the limelight and dedicated herself to circumspect and fact-driven rulings.

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### **Avenatti Charged With Tax Evasion, Stealing From Clients**

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles announced a 36-count indictment against attorney Michael Avenatti on Thursday, adding to the legal woes of a provocateur who already faced embezzlement and extortion charges.

[Read full article »](#)

#### **Analysis**

### **Will The Newest Charges Against Avenatti End His Career?**

President Donald Trump's bombastic legal sparring partner Michael Avenatti is facing the end of his career and possibly substantial jail time thanks to Thursday's detailed federal indictment on fraud and tax evasion charges, the latest in a string of financial and legal troubles that have followed his star turn.

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#### **Analysis**

### **'Varsity Blues' Judge Tough, Fair, And A Good Draw For Feds**

U.S. District Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton, the subject of a judge-shopping spat in the "Varsity Blues" case, is well-known around the Boston bar as a fair jurist, but one of the toughest on defendants and a potential delight for prosecutors.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Trump Defender, Ex-Wiley Rein Partner To Leave DOJ**

Brett Shumate, a former Wiley Rein LLP partner and one of the lead advocates tasked with defending President Donald Trump and his policies in court, revealed that he would be leaving the U.S. Department of Justice in a notice filed Thursday.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Dems Press Hunton On Ties To 'Secretive' Air Industry Group**

House Democrats on Thursday demanded information from Hunton Andrews Kurth and eight utility companies about their relationships with what the lawmakers blasted as a "secretive" front group devoted to rolling back air quality regulations.

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### **Hertz Wants Ex-GC To Cough Up Over \$70M In Clawbacks**

Hertz is looking to recover more than \$70 million in incentive pay and severance packages from former general counsel John Jeffrey Zimmerman and two other executives following their alleged roles in an accounting scandal from five years ago, according to a suit filed recently in New Jersey

[Piper Jaffray Companies](#)  
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#### **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

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federal court.

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### **Linklaters Ramps Up Flexible Work Offerings In The UK**

Magic Circle firm Linklaters on Thursday announced it has bolstered its flexible working policy in the U.K., expanding the privileges to any employee, without regard to seniority and without requiring staffers to spell out their reasons for seeking a change.

[Read full article »](#)

### **Law360's Weekly Verdict: Legal Lions & Lambs**

King & Spalding snatched this week's top legal lion spot after a jury found client Johnson & Johnson's talcum powder does not contain asbestos, while Morgan Lewis & Bockius was among the week's legal lambs with the Second Circuit reviving an employment suit against client Urban Outfitters.

[Read full article »](#)

### **CORRECTED: 3rd Circ. Revisits Del.'s Balance On Bench Rule**

A Third Circuit panel on Wednesday revisited a recent ruling that rejected Delaware's requirement that judicial applicants be registered Democrats or Republicans, though it kept the precedential decision largely intact. Correction: A previous version of this story mischaracterized the nature of the rehearing. The error has been corrected.

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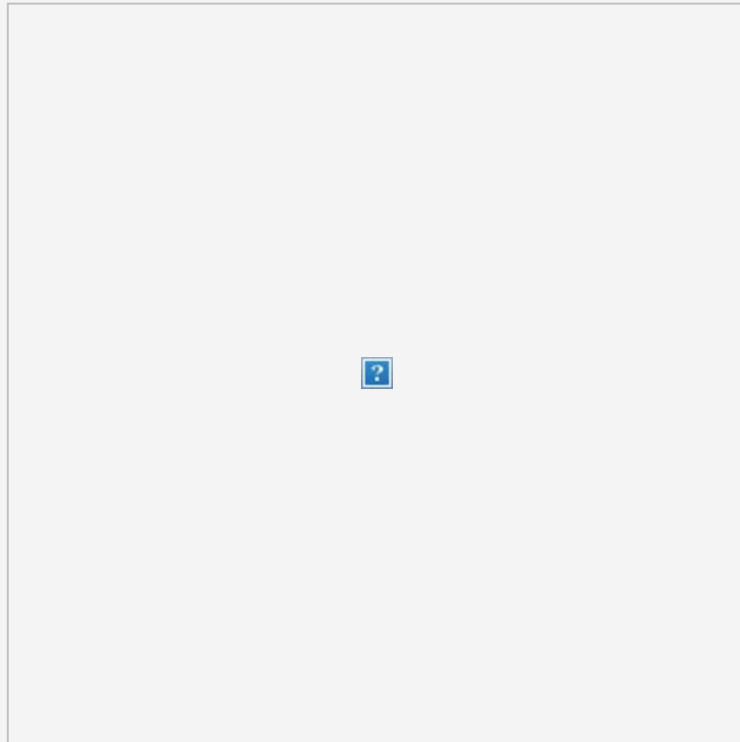
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**From:** [Morning Consult](#)  
**To:** [Christina Handley](#)  
**Subject:** Morning Consult Washington: Trump Says Bipartisan Budget Deal "Not Happening!"  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 8:18:25 AM

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By [Eli Yokley](#)

## Top Stories

- President Donald Trump said on Twitter that a budget deal with Congress that would ward off billions of dollars in spending cuts is "not happening!" His statement came after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced that he and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) were beginning negotiations on a two-year deal to raise budget caps. ([Politico](#))
- Herman Cain is expected to announce his decision to withdraw his name from consideration for the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors in the coming days, according to sources. Four Senate Republicans have come out in opposition to Cain's nomination, likely sinking his chances of confirmation by the Senate. ([ABC News](#))

- Trump administration officials twice proposed transporting detained immigrants to "sanctuary cities" and Democratic strongholds to retaliate against the president's political adversaries, according to sources and documents. Administration officials indicated the proposal is no longer under consideration. ([The Washington Post](#))

## Chart Review

**[Sanders 2020 Is Off To A Faster Start Than Sanders 2016](#)**

**FiveThirtyEight**

## Events Calendar (All Times Local)

**04/14/2019**

[Andrew Yang participates in CNN town hall](#)

8:00 pm

[View full calendar](#)



## The Brands That Define American Culture and Commerce

Morning Consult analyzed over 400,000 survey interviews to determine this year's rankings. See who made the list.

### General

[Comey Defends Trump Campaign Surveillance: 'I Have Never Thought of That as Spying'](#)

### **Zolan Kanno-Youngs and Michael S. Schmidt, The New York Times**

The former F.B.I. director James B. Comey said on Thursday that he knew of no electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign during the 2016 presidential election, defending the bureau after Attorney General William P. Barr asserted a day earlier that the bureau spied on the campaign as part of the Russia investigation. "When I hear that kind of language used, it's concerning because the F.B.I., the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance," said Mr. Comey, who oversaw the inquiry until President Trump abruptly fired him in May 2017.

### **Steve Bannon and U.S. ultra-conservatives take aim at Pope Francis** **Richard Engel and Kennett Werner, NBC News**

Strolling through St. Peter's Square, the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, Steve Bannon surveyed the enemy camp. The populist political consultant has a new target in his crusade against "globalism" - Pope Francis.

### **After Arrest of Julian Assange, the Russian Mysteries Remain** **Mark Mazzetti and Julian E. Barnes, The New York Times**

In June 2016, five months before the American presidential election, Julian Assange made a bold prediction during a little-noticed interview with a British television show. "WikiLeaks has a very big year ahead," he said, just seconds after announcing that the website he founded would soon be publishing a cache of emails related to Hillary Clinton.

### **You Paid Taxes. These Corporations Didn't.** **Kathryn Kranhold, Center for Public Integrity**

Taxpayers are scrambling to make last-minute payments due to the Internal Revenue Service in just four days, but many of the country's largest publicly-held corporations are doing better: They've reported they owe absolutely nothing on the billions of dollars in profits they earned last year. At least 60 companies reported that their 2018 federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or even less than zero, on income earned on U.S. operations, according to an analysis released today by the Washington, D.C.-based think tank, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

### **Inside Ivanka's Dreamworld** **Elaina Plott, The Atlantic**

You could tell by his eyes, the way they popped and gleamed and fixed on someone behind me. Only one person gets that kind of look from Donald Trump.

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## **White House & Administration**

### **[White House Seeks to Blunt Use of Informal Agency Actions](#)**

**Andrew Ackerman and Lalita Clozel, The Wall Street Journal**

The Trump administration has opened the door for Congress to more easily overturn financial rules issued as guidance rather than in a formal rule-making process, a win for an industry that has complained the practice can be unfair. Russell Vought, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget, said in a memo released Thursday federal agencies, including the Federal Reserve and other independent bank and markets regulators, should coordinate with the White House before publishing guidance that may be considered economically significant.

### **[Trump administration to unveil big 5G push](#)**

**Kim Hart, Axios**

President Trump and his top telecom regulator will announce plans today to unleash the largest-ever swath of radio frequencies in the U.S. and a \$20 billion fund to help wireless companies to keep pace with global rivals - specifically China - in the 5G race. Why it matters: Proponents maintain that a significant economic advantage will be won by the first country to broadly deploy 5G networks, which will deliver wireless speeds 100 times faster than today's mobile internet.

### **[In meeting with South Korea's Moon, Trump signals openness to smaller deal with North Korea in nuclear talks](#)**

**David Nakamura, The Washington Post**

President Trump on Thursday signaled he remains open to an incremental deal with North Korea that would help further the negotiations over nuclear disarmament, but he emphasized his administration remains focused on "the big deal." Ahead of a bilateral meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office, Trump told reporters that there are "various smaller deals that maybe could happen," and that the two leaders would be discussing

potential increases in humanitarian aid, including food assistance, to the North.

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## Senate

### [Schumer, McConnell trade blame as Senate declines](#)

**John Bresnahan et al., Politico**

Has the Senate finally hit rock bottom? Last fall's brutal confirmation fight over Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court confirmation led to such bad blood that even old friends weren't talking.

### [McConnell to Trump: Don't pick Cuccinelli to lead DHS](#)

**Jordain Carney, The Hill**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is publicly signaling to President Trump not to pick former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli to lead the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). "I've not spoken to him about any of them. I have expressed my, shall I say, lack of enthusiasm for one of them ... Ken Cuccinelli," McConnell told reporters during a pen-and-pad briefing in the Capitol on Thursday.

### [Secretary Chao grilled on aviation safety oversight following Boeing 737 Max crashes](#)

**Michael Laris, The Washington Post**

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao was grilled at a budget hearing Wednesday on her oversight of aviation safety, as multiple inquiries continue into two crashes of Boeing 737 Max planes. Citing a Trump administration proposal last month to cut \$9 million from the Federal Aviation Administration's Aviation Safety organization and tens of millions of dollars from automobile safety programs, Rep. David E. Price (D-N.C.) said the Transportation Department's budget request "doesn't reflect the rhetoric we hear from the department about taking a safety-first approach."

### [Space Force Brought Down to Earth in Senate Hearing](#)

**Nancy A. Youssef, The Wall Street Journal**

Senators from both parties told senior Pentagon leaders on Thursday that they were unconvinced a sixth military branch dedicated to space-and the necessary

bureaucracy needed to make it run-was the best way to address the emerging threat beyond Earth's atmosphere from Russia and China. The skepticism from a majority members of the Senate Armed Services Committee renewed doubts that Congress would approve President Trump's proposed Space Force, which would be subsumed within the Air Force the way the Marine Corps is part of the Navy.

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## House

### [Powell maintains his distance from Trump in speech to House Democrats](#)

**Mike DeBonis and Rachael Bade, The Washington Post**

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell gently asserted his independence from President Trump in a private meeting with House Democrats on Thursday night, declaring that political identification and pressures have little bearing on his decisions as head of the nation's fiscal overseer, according to multiple people in the room. Speaking at the House Democratic Caucus retreat, Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation's economy.

### [Dems rush to Omar's aid amid conservative backlash on 9/11 comments](#)

**Sarah Ferris and Heather Caygle, Politico**

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other House Democrats are jumping to the defense of Rep. Ilhan Omar as she faces yet another wave of conservative attacks for her recent remarks on the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. "We are getting to the level where this is an incitement of violence against progressive women of color," Ocasio-Cortez told reporters at the House Democratic retreat here Thursday.

### [Silicon Valley's self-regulating days "probably should be" over, Nancy Pelosi says](#)

**Eric Johnson, Recode**

It's a "new era" for tech regulation, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says. "In the UK, as you know, they've said the era of self-regulation of these companies is over," she told Kara Swisher on an upcoming episode of the Recode Decode



podcast.

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## 2020

### [Susan Rice says she won't challenge GOP Sen. Collins in 2020](#)

**The Associated Press**

Susan Rice, who served as national security adviser under President Barack Obama, won't be challenging Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine in 2020. Rice told former Obama administration official Alyssa Mastromonaco at the 10th annual Women in the World Summit on Thursday in New York that she loves Maine and that her family has deep roots in the state. But she said she decided with her family "that the timing really isn't right for us."

### [Joe Manchin endorses Susan Collins for reelection](#)

**Burgess Everett, Politico**

Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin endorsed GOP Sen. Susan Collins for reelection on Thursday, in a rare rebuff of partisan politics in an increasingly polarized Senate. The moderate West Virginia senator also offered to campaign for the vulnerable Maine incumbent.

### ['Liz Was a Diehard Conservative'](#)

**Alex Thompson, Politico**

"Fight." It's the signature word of Senator Elizabeth Warren's short but consequential political career.

### ['If I can wrestle an alligator, I can certainly wrestle Donald Trump!'](#)

**Laura Vozzella, The Washington Post**

Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, long wrestling with whether to run for the White House, has finally hit upon a perfect meme - one that evokes the literal swamp creature he once battled for campaign cash. "Of all the candidates running, how many have actually wrestled a 280 pound, 8-foot alligator for a political contribution?" the Democrat told a crowd of union leaders Wednesday.

### [Letters from Joe Biden reveal how he sought support of segregationists in fight against busing](#)

## **Jeff Zeleny, CNN**

Joe Biden's road to a third presidential bid has been lined with a series of explanations and apologies, illustrating the challenges of preparing a long record of public service for fresh scrutiny under the spotlight of the 2020 campaign. Yet he rarely discusses one of the earliest - and most controversial - issues he championed in the Senate: his fight against busing to desegregate schools.

### **[Andrew Yang's campaign and supporters struggle to push away extremists, leaked chats show](#)**

**Ben Collins and EJ Fox, NBC News**

Andrew Yang, a long-shot candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, has won some attention in the national political debate in recent months thanks in part to a fervent online support network called the "Yang Gang" that pushes support of the candidate on several social media platforms. But the campaign's internet-driven momentum and Yang's signature policy position - that the U.S. government should provide a universal basic income of \$1,000 per month to every American adult - have also attracted some of the web's most politically extreme fringe groups, often alt-right users from the fringe internet forum 4chan who express racist views.

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## **States**

### **[A surge of restrictive state abortion bans take aim at Roe v. Wade](#)**

**Khorri Atkinson, Axios**

Energized by the Supreme Court's solid conservative majority, Ohio Republican Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the country's most restrictive abortion measures into law on Thursday, criminalizing the procedure after the first detectable fetal heartbeat - which can be as early as 6 weeks into pregnancy. The big picture: The "fetal heartbeat" measure, approved by the GOP-controlled legislature on Wednesday, prohibits abortion at a point when many women aren't even aware they are pregnant.

### **[Illinois Senate Tells Trump, Show Your Tax Returns Or Be Barred From The 2020 Ballot](#)**

**Dave McKinney, WBEZ**

The Democratic-led Illinois Senate voted Thursday to compel President Trump to release five years' worth of his personal income tax returns or be barred from appearing on the state's presidential ballot next year. The state is joining a movement of other Democratic states that aims to force the president to open up his personal finances by releasing his tax returns, something he stubbornly has refused to do and reiterated again this week.

### **New Georgia ethics chief says he will subpoena Abrams campaign records**

**Jamse Salzer, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution**

The new director of the state ethics commission plans to subpoena bank records from the campaign of 2018 Democratic gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams and groups that raised money to help her in last year's nationally watched race. Former Douglas County prosecutor David Emadi, who started his new job Monday, also said his office will soon decide whether to prosecute the campaigns of Atlanta mayoral candidates.

### **New Hampshire Lawmakers Pass Bill to Ban Death Penalty**

**John Kamp, The Wall Street Journal**

The New Hampshire state Senate voted to abolish the death penalty, sending the bill to Republican Gov. Chris Sununu with enough support to overcome a planned veto. The state House passed the repeal bill with veto-proof numbers in March.

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## **Advocacy**

### **UBS hires Jeb Hensarling, the Dallas Republican who chaired U.S. House panel that oversees banking sector**

**Todd J. Gillman, The Dallas Morning News**

Swiss banking giant UBS has hired Jeb Hensarling, the Dallas Republican who spent his final six years in Congress chairing the committee that oversees the financial sector. Hensarling will serve as executive vice chairman of the Americas region, based in UBS's Dallas office, the company announced Thursday.

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## Opinions, Editorials and Perspectives

### [Vetting Democrats Is Not 'Eating Our Own'](#)

**Connie Schultz, Creators**

Democrats, please, I'm begging you. Let's call a moratorium on the phrase "eating our own," and all of its variations, for the duration of the Democratic presidential primary season.

### [It's the Sexism, Stupid](#)

**Kate Manne, Politico**

If 2018 was supposed to be the Year of the Woman, when women were elected to Congress in record numbers, what is 2019? So far, at least in politics, it's proving to be the Year of the White Guy.

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## Research Reports and Polling

### [The Comeback Kid: Donald Trump on Election Day in 2016](#)

**Seth C. McKee et al., Texas Tech University et al.**

The surprise outcome of the 2016 presidential election continues to raise more questions as experts grapple with the evidence for why most prognosticators considered a Hillary Clinton victory almost certain. This article uses the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study data to show that a primary explanation for why the election of Donald Trump was difficult to predict is that the bulk of his support did not materialize until Election Day, in the battleground states that he had to carry to win the Electoral College.

### [The Democratic Nomination: It Doesn't Have to be a Long Slog](#)

**Kyle Kondik, Sabato's Crystal Ball**

With a growing field of about 20 candidates, the lion's share of which should be able to get on to one of the first two debate stages in Miami in late June, Democrats are gearing up for what could be a very crowded, and very lengthy, presidential nomination battle. For a number of different reasons, it is possible that the nomination season, held from February to early June 2020, will not determine a winner.



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**From:** [Americans for Limited Government](#)  
**To:** [Anton Porter](#)  
**Subject:** Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?  
**Date:** Thursday, April 11, 2019 9:39:13 AM

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6



**April 11, 2019**

*Permission to republish original opeds and cartoons granted.*

**Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?**

*Attorney General William Barr has testified acknowledging that the Trump campaign was spied on by the Obama administration during the 2016 election campaign for a crime, conspiring with Russia to interfere in the election, that was never even committed. Of course spying occurred. The nearly three-year investigation was complete with Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants, approved in federal court, that allowed federal officials to look at Trump campaign emails, listen to phone calls and see other communications. That's what a FISA warrant does. It's for surveillance, which is right in the name of the statute. That is spying. The problem is that it even if it was unconstitutional, it was not against the law and*

it needs to be.

### **Robed resisters go to ground**

*Last fall, Chief Justice John Roberts asserted that “we do not have Obama judges” after President Donald Trump suggested that we did. While it is understandable that Roberts would like for the courts to be viewed as non-partisan, the fact of the matter is that President Trump is right: we do have Obama judges. We have seen that fact demonstrated as these judges have repeatedly sought to thwart the President’s agenda.*

### **Barr acknowledges 'spying did occur,' but that's not all, Manning says**

*Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning: “While we are heartened that Attorney General Barr is acknowledging what has been clear for a long time, that spying did occur in 2016 against the Trump campaign and continued into the transition and then administration, with all due respect to the Attorney General, the question here is not whether there was unauthorized surveillance. The trouble here is that the surveillance was authorized despite the fact that it lacked credible and verified allegations.”*

### **Kim Guilfoyle: This isn’t the first time the FBI has been accused of harassing innocent Americans**

*“The attorney general brought up the surveillance of Martin Luther King and antiwar groups in the Vietnam war era. ‘The generation I grew up in, which is the Vietnam War period, people were all concerned about spying on anti-war people and so forth by the government,’ he said. The misconduct by high-level officials at the Department of Justice and the FBI alleged in the Russia hoax are right out of the dirty tricks playbook the FBI and intelligence agencies used in the 1960s and 70s. To refresh the memory of amnesiac Democrats, that playbook can be found in the final Senate Intelligence Committee’s report, ‘Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Book Two, Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans.’”*

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**Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign by the Obama administration. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?**

By Robert Romano

“I think spying did occur... but the question is whether it was predicated, adequately predicated?”

That was Attorney General William Barr [testifying](#) before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Science and Justice on April 10, acknowledging that the Trump campaign was spied on by the Obama administration during the 2016 election campaign. Barr outlined his impending review of the conduct of the Justice Department, the FBI and U.S. intelligence agencies in launching surveillance and an investigation of the Trump campaign for conspiring with Russia to interfere with the 2016 election — a crime we now know was [never committed](#).

And of course spying occurred. The nearly three-year investigation was complete with [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act \(FISA\) warrants](#), approved in federal court, that allowed federal officials to look at Trump campaign emails, listen to phone calls and see other



communications.

That's what a FISA warrant does. It's for surveillance, which is right in the name of the statute. That is spying.

What's worse, the months-long surveillance resulted in individuals being prosecuted for unrelated process crimes and otherwise destroyed people's lives, only to find out later there was no conspiracy or coordination with Russia after [an exhaustive probe](#) by Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

As for whether the spying was justified, one need only look to the fact that there was no conspiracy by Trump with Russia, and the basis for the investigation into Trump, his campaign, the transition and then the Trump administration could not have possibly been adequately predicated.

Because it was based on a slew of lies. The [dossier](#) that the FISA warrants relied on, by former British spy Christopher Steele, was paid for by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Hillary Clinton campaign. But Steele says he never went to Russia, and he has stated [in testimony](#) that the allegations needed to be "further corroborated and verified." He relied on a network of informants.

Right off the bat, it was second-hand and maybe even third-hand information, hearsay that should have never been admissible in a court of law. Steele was not an eye witness to any of the allegations he published and it is not even clear that his sources were, either, since in some cases, the events described never even occurred.

Steele said the sources were Russian but did not name them: Source A was a "former top Russian intelligence officer"; Source B was a "senior Russian Foreign Ministry figure"; Source C was a "senior Russian financial official"; Source D was a "close associate of Trump" (golden showers source); Source E was an "ethnic Russian close associate" of Trump (golden showers source); Source F was a "female staffer of the hotel"; and source G was a "senior Kremlin official".

Were these sources even real? Was it Russian disinformation that the FBI then acted on? Was the FISA judge ever advised about Steele's own doubts about the allegations?

In fact, almost [none of the principal allegations panned out](#). Former Trump campaign advisor Carter Page was never charged with any crime, let alone committing espionage in league with Russia to hack the DNC and put the emails on Wikileaks while on a business trip to Moscow in July 2016. Former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort was brought up on unrelated bank and tax charges predating the campaign. Former Trump Organization attorney Michael Cohen [never traveled to Prague](#) in his entire life, let alone in August or September of 2016 as the dossier alleged, and so he very well could not have been there meeting with Russian agents to mop up the fallout of the hacks and Wikileaks publications.

Later it was contended that the basis for the investigation was not the Steele dossier or Carter Page, but [former Trump campaign advisor George Papadopoulos](#), who was promised Hillary Clinton private server emails by Joseph Mifsud. But Papadopoulos is now contending in his new book, ["Deep State Target,"](#) that the meetings he participated in were set up, not by Russian intelligence, but [Western intelligence agencies](#) to create the appearance that he was coordinating with Russia. In short, that it was some sort of sting operation. Barr needs to explore those allegations, too, even if they reveal that U.S. allies were intimately involved with the operation to spy on the Trump campaign. Papadopoulos deserves his reputation back.

For his part, Barr is promising that his review of the investigation will cover all bases. He

stated, “I feel I have an obligation to make sure that government power is not abused. I mean, I think that’s one of the principal roles of the Attorney General.”

Barr explained, “I think spying on a political campaign is a big deal, it’s a big deal. The generation I grew up in, which was the Vietnam War period, people were all concerned about spying on anti-war people and so forth by the government. And there were a lot of rules put in place to make sure that there’s an adequate basis before our law enforcement agencies get involved in political surveillance.”

Here, Barr is spot on in his implied reference to [the select committee](#) led by the late Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), convened in 1975 to investigate the revelations of [Seymour Hersh’s report to the New York Times on Dec. 22, 1974](#) that the CIA had been engaged a mass, domestic surveillance program against anti-war protestors, members of Congress and other political figures. The committee led to the adoption of FISA in 1978, which was supposed to prevent this sort of political spying from ever occurring again.

It failed. Whether that was because it was violated or, worse, is so permissive of domestic spying that it allowed the Russia collusion hoax to be perpetrated on the American people is an important question that needs to be answered. But that is only the beginning of the work that must be done.

Barr said of FISA in his testimony, “I’m not suggesting those rules were violated but I think it’s important to look at that.” Later in his testimony, he couched his description of the spying he would be reviewing, saying, “I want to make sure there was no unauthorized surveillance.”

Certainly, if there was any unauthorized spying, we need to know that. But, says Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning in a statement, the problem is that much of the surveillance we know about in some instances, including the FISA warrants, is that they were authorized: “While we are heartened that Attorney General Barr is acknowledging what has been clear for a long time, that spying did occur in 2016 against the Trump campaign and continued into the transition and then administration, with all due respect to the Attorney General, the question here is not whether there was unauthorized surveillance. The trouble here is that the surveillance was authorized despite the fact that it lacked credible and verified allegations.”

Barr himself might be leaning on a theory of where the fault may lie, pointing to leaders in the Justice Department, “To the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that is endemic to the FBI. I think there was a failure among a group of leaders there at the upper echelon.”

Meaning, what we may learn at the end of the day is that FISA is not up to the task of preventing these types of abuses of power. But we’ll see how this goes. Maybe shady accounts like the Steele dossier, that is, the use of unverified, raw intelligence is commonplace when officials go in to request FISA warrants.

A common refrain is that these tools are necessary to stop terrorists and other bad guys. But if innocent Americans can be portrayed as enemies of state and targeted for surveillance, that’s a huge problem.

Barr and the Justice Department does indeed have an obligation to identify and prevent these sorts of abuses. Courts depend on the officers of the court as reliable sources of information but these probable cause hearings amount to little more than rubber stamps. Probable cause has been watered down to mere “reasonable” possibilities. Good luck showing an application was constitutionally defective, and if the FISA warrants were unconstitutional, [courts generally allow the evidence to still be used](#) if the officers acted in

“good faith.” The rules are so stacked in the prosecution’s favor that abuses like those seen with the Russia collusion hoax are truly probable. And innocent people are going to be targeted again if we don’t figure this out. But even after the Edward Snowden disclosures of mass surveillance by government agencies were revealed, and almost nothing changed, there is little hope it will ever be reined in. Indeed, this type of spying has been going on for generations.

Barr did point to ongoing investigations by the Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz that are reviewing these very questions and the nation patiently awaits those findings. But Barr has his work cut out for him, and there are very good reasons to be cynical about the ultimate outcome. The deck is hopelessly stacked. The bottom line is that if the spying that happened here is not against the law, it needs to be. This was a trial run for tyranny. Unfortunately, Congress has proven time and again that it has no intention of stopping mass surveillance. We live in a police state.

*Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.*

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## Robed resisters go to ground

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By Richard McCarty

Last fall, Chief Justice John Roberts asserted that “we do not have Obama judges” after President Donald Trump suggested that we did. While it is understandable that Roberts would like for the courts to be viewed as non-partisan, the fact of the matter is that President Trump is right: we do have Obama judges. We have seen that fact demonstrated as these judges have repeatedly sought to thwart the President’s agenda.

One area in which Obama judges have obstructed is immigration, and that obstruction started early in the Trump Administration. In April of 2017, William Orrick, a federal district judge in California, [blocked](#) Trump’s executive order defunding sanctuary cities. Last November, the uber-liberal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Administration [must continue](#) the unconstitutional Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allows illegal immigrants who arrived as children to stay here. Two of the three judges who made the decision were Obama appointees: John Owens and Jacqueline Nguyen. (The third judge was a Clinton appointee.) That same month, Jon Tigar, a federal district judge in California, [blocked](#) Trump’s policy requiring asylum seekers to apply at ports of entry.

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*Richard McCarty is the Director of Research at Americans for Limited Government.*

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### **Barr acknowledges 'spying did occur,' but that's not all, Manning says**

*If the political spying did not violate FISA, then we need FISA reform now.*

April 10, 2019, Fairfax, Va.—Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning today issued the following statement in response to Attorney General William Barr's [acknowledgement](#) that “spying did occur” in 2016 against the Trump campaign:

“The Attorney General's acknowledgement that spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign is a significant step in the right direction to cleaning up the abuse of power that occurred in the Russia collusion hoax during the Obama administration. Spying on the opposition party in an election year, based on fabricated allegations of foreign espionage, is one of the most profound attacks on the Constitution and civil liberties in our history. FISA was set up to stop political weaponization of intelligence.

“While we are heartened that Attorney General Barr is acknowledging what has been clear for a long time, that spying did occur in 2016 against the Trump campaign and continued into the transition and then administration, with all due respect to the Attorney General, the question here is not whether there was unauthorized surveillance. The trouble here is that the surveillance was authorized despite the fact that it lacked credible and verified allegations.

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## **This isn't the first time the FBI has been accused of harassing innocent Americans**

By Kim Guilfoyle

"I think spying did occur."

That's Attorney General William Barr's bombshell [assessment](#) of allegations the government was conducting surveillance of the Trump campaign.

Democratic senators were taken aback by Barr's testimony before the Judiciary Committee on Wednesday. They asked him to clarify his statement. Barr didn't backtrack. "The question is whether it was adequately predicated," Barr said, adding, "I have an obligation to make sure that government power is not abused."

Democrats desperately want to keep the media narrative on the Mueller report. By obsessing over when, how and how much of the testimony behind it will be released, Democrats are trying to divert attention from an issue of far greater significance.

"Congress is usually very concerned with intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies staying in their proper lane," Barr stated matter-of-factly.

There are now serious questions about whether intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies were "staying in their proper lane."

These are some of the questions Barr wants answers to:

Exactly how did the Russia hoax begin?

Who first claimed that the Trump campaign conspired with the Kremlin?

Who ordered confidential informants contact members of the Trump campaign?

Did Halper — or other informants — provide the FBI with the pretext for a counterintelligence investigation and the wiretapping of a presidential campaign?

What other Americans were targets of electronic surveillance? Sen. Lindsey Graham has [asked](#), "of the 1,950 [electronic surveillance information] collections on American citizens, how many of them involved presidential candidates, members of Congress from either party and if these conversations were unmasked, who made the request?"

Did people in the Obama administration listen in to these conversations? Was there a politicizing of the intelligence gathering processes?

There are serious concerns that the Russia collusion investigation is the result of misconduct at the highest levels of the FBI and Department of Justice.

House Intelligence Committee ranking member Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) is preparing to send eight criminal [referrals](#) to the Department of Justice concerning alleged misconduct from "Watergate wannabes" during the Trump-Russia investigation, including leaks of "highly classified material" and conspiracies to lie to Congress and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court.

There's the matter of confidential informant [Stefan Halper](#), who contacted Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos. Halper has a history of working with intelligence agencies and infiltrating presidential campaigns.

There's the matter of the Steele dossier, the opposition research document of unverified

information (and disinformation) from Russian intelligence sources.

The dossier was paid for by the Clinton campaign, laundered through Obama State Department officials who gave it a thin sheen of veracity, and forwarded to the FBI. The FBI used that dossier to obtain warrants from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance court to wiretap the Trump campaign.

There's the matter of the FBI using its counter-intelligence division to leak derogatory information that falsely implicated President Trump in the Russia collusion story.

There's the matter of the wiretapping of American citizens whose identities were publicly revealed.

The special counsel did not investigate any of this. But Barr will.

The attorney general brought up the surveillance of Martin Luther King and antiwar groups in the Vietnam war era. "The generation I grew up in, which is the Vietnam War period, people were all concerned about spying on anti-war people and so forth by the government," he said.

The misconduct by high-level officials at the Department of Justice and the FBI alleged in the Russia hoax are right out of the dirty tricks playbook the FBI and intelligence agencies used in the 1960s and 70s.

To refresh the memory of amnesiac Democrats, that playbook can be [found](#) in the final Senate Intelligence Committee's report, "Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Book Two, Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans."

What the committee wrote in 1976 is relevant today. "The Government has often undertaken the secret surveillance of citizens on the basis of their political beliefs ... Investigations have been based upon vague standards whose breadth made excessive collection inevitable. Unsavory and vicious tactics have been employed" (page 5).

If we go down the list of "unsavory and vicious tactics" employed in the Russia hoax we find them detailed in the Senate report.

Informants infiltrating and framing enemies? Check.

"The most pervasive surveillance technique has been the informant ... used against peaceful, law-abiding groups" (page 13). The pretext of looking for hostile foreign actors triggered investigations of Americans "engaged in lawful political activity [who] have been subjected to informant coverage and intelligence scrutiny." (pages 175-176)

Compiling dossiers on enemies? Check.

Every president from FDR to Nixon used the FBI to dig up dirt on political enemies, including journalists (page 227), Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders.

Leak derogatory information to the media to manipulate public opinion and the political process? Check.

The FBI "affected the processes by which American citizens make decisions. ... it distorted and exaggerated facts, made use of the mass media, and attacked [those] ... it considered threats" (page 226).

As Barr told senators, congressional Democrats used to be concerned about abuses by our security agencies.

Now Democrats are guilty of perpetrating one of those abuses: "Intelligence investigations ... continued for excessively long periods in efforts to prove negatives." (pages 180 -182)

When the FBI found no evidence a key advisor to Martin Luther King was a communist sympathizer, "Using a theory of 'guilty until proven innocent,' FBI headquarters directed that the investigation continue."

Having failed to find any evidence of collusion or obstruction, Congressional Democrats are more determined than ever to pursue open-ended investigations to prove a negative.

My suggestion to Democrats: While you're waiting for Barr to deliver the Mueller report to you, read the Senate Select Committee's report from 1976.

That will show you what you should be worried about.

[Permalink here.](#)

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**From:** [Americans for Limited Government](#)  
**To:** [Joshua Hill](#)  
**Subject:** Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?  
**Date:** Thursday, April 11, 2019 9:39:15 AM

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**April 11, 2019**

*Permission to republish original opeds and cartoons granted.*

**Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?**

*Attorney General William Barr has testified acknowledging that the Trump campaign was spied on by the Obama administration during the 2016 election campaign for a crime, conspiring with Russia to interfere in the election, that was never even committed. Of course spying occurred. The nearly three-year investigation was complete with Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants, approved in federal court, that allowed federal officials to look at Trump campaign emails, listen to phone calls and see other communications. That's what a FISA warrant does. It's for surveillance, which is right in the name of the statute. That is spying. The problem is that it even if it was unconstitutional, it was not against the law and*

it needs to be.

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**Of course spying occurred in 2016 against the Trump campaign by the Obama administration. What do you think a FISA warrant is for?**

By Robert Romano

“I think spying did occur... but the question is whether it was predicated, adequately predicated?”

That was Attorney General William Barr [testifying](#) before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Science and Justice on April 10, acknowledging that the Trump campaign was spied on by the Obama administration during the 2016 election campaign. Barr outlined his impending review of the conduct of the Justice Department, the FBI and U.S. intelligence agencies in launching surveillance and an investigation of the Trump campaign for conspiring with Russia to interfere with the 2016 election — a crime we now know was [never committed](#).

And of course spying occurred. The nearly three-year investigation was complete with [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act \(FISA\) warrants](#), approved in federal court, that allowed federal officials to look at Trump campaign emails, listen to phone calls and see other

communications.

That's what a FISA warrant does. It's for surveillance, which is right in the name of the statute. That is spying.

What's worse, the months-long surveillance resulted in individuals being prosecuted for unrelated process crimes and otherwise destroyed people's lives, only to find out later there was no conspiracy or coordination with Russia after [an exhaustive probe](#) by Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

As for whether the spying was justified, one need only look to the fact that there was no conspiracy by Trump with Russia, and the basis for the investigation into Trump, his campaign, the transition and then the Trump administration could not have possibly been adequately predicated.

Because it was based on a slew of lies. The [dossier](#) that the FISA warrants relied on, by former British spy Christopher Steele, was paid for by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Hillary Clinton campaign. But Steele says he never went to Russia, and he has stated [in testimony](#) that the allegations needed to be "further corroborated and verified." He relied on a network of informants.

Right off the bat, it was second-hand and maybe even third-hand information, hearsay that should have never been admissible in a court of law. Steele was not an eye witness to any of the allegations he published and it is not even clear that his sources were, either, since in some cases, the events described never even occurred.

Steele said the sources were Russian but did not name them: Source A was a "former top Russian intelligence officer"; Source B was a "senior Russian Foreign Ministry figure"; Source C was a "senior Russian financial official"; Source D was a "close associate of Trump" (golden showers source); Source E was an "ethnic Russian close associate" of Trump (golden showers source); Source F was a "female staffer of the hotel"; and source G was a "senior Kremlin official".

Were these sources even real? Was it Russian disinformation that the FBI then acted on? Was the FISA judge ever advised about Steele's own doubts about the allegations?

In fact, almost [none of the principal allegations panned out](#). Former Trump campaign advisor Carter Page was never charged with any crime, let alone committing espionage in league with Russia to hack the DNC and put the emails on Wikileaks while on a business trip to Moscow in July 2016. Former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort was brought up on unrelated bank and tax charges predating the campaign. Former Trump Organization attorney Michael Cohen [never traveled to Prague](#) in his entire life, let alone in August or September of 2016 as the dossier alleged, and so he very well could not have been there meeting with Russian agents to mop up the fallout of the hacks and Wikileaks publications.

Later it was contended that the basis for the investigation was not the Steele dossier or Carter Page, but [former Trump campaign advisor George Papadopoulos](#), who was promised Hillary Clinton private server emails by Joseph Mifsud. But Papadopoulos is now contending in his new book, ["Deep State Target,"](#) that the meetings he participated in were set up, not by Russian intelligence, but [Western intelligence agencies](#) to create the appearance that he was coordinating with Russia. In short, that it was some sort of sting operation. Barr needs to explore those allegations, too, even if they reveal that U.S. allies were intimately involved with the operation to spy on the Trump campaign. Papadopoulos deserves his reputation back.

For his part, Barr is promising that his review of the investigation will cover all bases. He

stated, “I feel I have an obligation to make sure that government power is not abused. I mean, I think that’s one of the principal roles of the Attorney General.”

Barr explained, “I think spying on a political campaign is a big deal, it’s a big deal. The generation I grew up in, which was the Vietnam War period, people were all concerned about spying on anti-war people and so forth by the government. And there were a lot of rules put in place to make sure that there’s an adequate basis before our law enforcement agencies get involved in political surveillance.”

Here, Barr is spot on in his implied reference to [the select committee](#) led by the late Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), convened in 1975 to investigate the revelations of [Seymour Hersh’s report to the New York Times on Dec. 22, 1974](#) that the CIA had been engaged a mass, domestic surveillance program against anti-war protestors, members of Congress and other political figures. The committee led to the adoption of FISA in 1978, which was supposed to prevent this sort of political spying from ever occurring again.

It failed. Whether that was because it was violated or, worse, is so permissive of domestic spying that it allowed the Russia collusion hoax to be perpetrated on the American people is an important question that needs to be answered. But that is only the beginning of the work that must be done.

Barr said of FISA in his testimony, “I’m not suggesting those rules were violated but I think it’s important to look at that.” Later in his testimony, he couched his description of the spying he would be reviewing, saying, “I want to make sure there was no unauthorized surveillance.”

Certainly, if there was any unauthorized spying, we need to know that. But, says Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning in a statement, the problem is that much of the surveillance we know about in some instances, including the FISA warrants, is that they were authorized: “While we are heartened that Attorney General Barr is acknowledging what has been clear for a long time, that spying did occur in 2016 against the Trump campaign and continued into the transition and then administration, with all due respect to the Attorney General, the question here is not whether there was unauthorized surveillance. The trouble here is that the surveillance was authorized despite the fact that it lacked credible and verified allegations.”

Barr himself might be leaning on a theory of where the fault may lie, pointing to leaders in the Justice Department, “To the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that is endemic to the FBI. I think there was a failure among a group of leaders there at the upper echelon.”

Meaning, what we may learn at the end of the day is that FISA is not up to the task of preventing these types of abuses of power. But we’ll see how this goes. Maybe shady accounts like the Steele dossier, that is, the use of unverified, raw intelligence is commonplace when officials go in to request FISA warrants.

A common refrain is that these tools are necessary to stop terrorists and other bad guys. But if innocent Americans can be portrayed as enemies of state and targeted for surveillance, that’s a huge problem.

Barr and the Justice Department does indeed have an obligation to identify and prevent these sorts of abuses. Courts depend on the officers of the court as reliable sources of information but these probable cause hearings amount to little more than rubber stamps. Probable cause has been watered down to mere “reasonable” possibilities. Good luck showing an application was constitutionally defective, and if the FISA warrants were unconstitutional, [courts generally allow the evidence to still be used](#) if the officers acted in

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To refresh the memory of amnesiac Democrats, that playbook can be [found](#) in the final Senate Intelligence Committee's report, "Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Book Two, Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans."

What the committee wrote in 1976 is relevant today. "The Government has often undertaken the secret surveillance of citizens on the basis of their political beliefs ... Investigations have been based upon vague standards whose breadth made excessive collection inevitable. Unsavory and vicious tactics have been employed" (page 5).

If we go down the list of "unsavory and vicious tactics" employed in the Russia hoax we find them detailed in the Senate report.

Informants infiltrating and framing enemies? Check.

"The most pervasive surveillance technique has been the informant ... used against peaceful, law-abiding groups" (page 13). The pretext of looking for hostile foreign actors triggered investigations of Americans "engaged in lawful political activity [who] have been subjected to informant coverage and intelligence scrutiny." (pages 175-176)

Compiling dossiers on enemies? Check.

Every president from FDR to Nixon used the FBI to dig up dirt on political enemies, including journalists (page 227), Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders.

Leak derogatory information to the media to manipulate public opinion and the political process? Check.

The FBI "affected the processes by which American citizens make decisions. ... it distorted and exaggerated facts, made use of the mass media, and attacked [those] ... it considered threats" (page 226).

As Barr told senators, congressional Democrats used to be concerned about abuses by our security agencies.

Now Democrats are guilty of perpetrating one of those abuses: "Intelligence investigations ... continued for excessively long periods in efforts to prove negatives." (pages 180 -182)

When the FBI found no evidence a key advisor to Martin Luther King was a communist sympathizer, "Using a theory of 'guilty until proven innocent,' FBI headquarters directed that the investigation continue."

Having failed to find any evidence of collusion or obstruction, Congressional Democrats are more determined than ever to pursue open-ended investigations to prove a negative.

My suggestion to Democrats: While you're waiting for Barr to deliver the Mueller report to you, read the Senate Select Committee's report from 1976.

That will show you what you should be worried about.

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- [www.darkreading.com](http://www.darkreading.com): Triton/Trisis Attacks Another Victim
- [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com): Triton hackers return with new, covert industrial attack
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- [www.theregister.co.uk](http://www.theregister.co.uk): Patch blues-day: Microsoft yanks code after some PCs are rendered super secure (and unbootable) following update
- [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com): Windows 7 problems: Microsoft blocks April updates to systems at risk of freezing
- [www.bleepingcomputer.com](http://www.bleepingcomputer.com): Microsoft's April 2019 Updates are Causing Windows to Freeze
- [portal.msrm.microsoft.com](http://portal.msrm.microsoft.com): Security Update Summary
- [helpx.adobe.com](http://helpx.adobe.com): Updates available for Adobe Flash Player | APSB19-19
- [helpx.adobe.com](http://helpx.adobe.com): Security updates available for Adobe Acrobat and Reader | APSB19-17

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- [motherboard.vice.com](http://motherboard.vice.com): Julian Assange's Charges Are Centered on Hacking, Not Publishing Classified Information
- [arstechnica.com](http://arstechnica.com): Julian Assange arrested, charged with conspiracy to hack US computers
- [www.justice.gov](http://www.justice.gov): WikiLeaks Founder Charged in Computer Hacking Conspiracy
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GMail Will Be Supporting MTA-STS and SMTP TLS Reporting

<https://tools.ietf.org>

<https://tools.ietf.org>

<https://www.zdnet.com>

Vulnerability in Apache Axis

<https://rhinosecuritylabs.com>

Golang DLL Injection Vulnerability

<https://www.openwall.com>

WPA3 Dragonblood Vulnerability (PDF)

<http://papers.mathyvanhoef.com>

North Korean Trojan: HOPLIGHT

<https://www.us-cert.gov>

Gaza Cybergang Group1 "SneakyPastes"

<https://securelist.com>

Juniper Patch Fixes Static Password in Junos OS

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WPA3 Dragonblood Vulnerability (PDF)

<http://papers.mathyvanhoef.com>

North Korean Trojan: HOPLIGHT

<https://www.us-cert.gov>

Gaza Cybergang Group1 "SneakyPastes"

<https://securelist.com>

Juniper Patch Fixes Static Password in Junos OS

<https://kb.juniper.net>

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**To:** [Joshua Hill](#)  
**Subject:** Supreme Court Agrees To Reconsider "Auer" Deference  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 4:19:53 AM



## PUBLIC POLICY

Tuesday, December 11, 2018



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Alibaba Group Holdings Ltd.

Amazon.com Inc.

American Arbitration Association

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Apple Inc.

Association for Accessible Medicines

Black Hills Corporation

Cable News Network Inc.

Center for Constitutional Rights

Chevron Corp.

Computer & Communications Industry Association

Democratic National Committee

Digital Realty Trust Inc.

ESPN Inc.

EisnerAmper LLP

Entergy Corp.

Equifax Inc.

Exxon Mobil Corp.

Facebook

Faculty Athletics Representatives Association

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV

Food Network

Ford Motor Co.

General Motors

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Orion Energy Systems, Inc  
PAREXEL International Corporation  
Planned Parenthood Federation  
Power Solutions International Inc.  
Public Service Enterprise Group Inc.  
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ROC Nation LLC  
Shanghai Stock Exchange Ltd.  
Shenzhen Stock Exchange  
Sierra Club  
Snap Inc.  
Sonos Inc.  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Sprint Nextel Corporation  
State Bar of Texas  
T-Mobile USA Inc.  
The American Law Institute  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
The Gap Inc.  
The Wireless Internet Service Providers Association  
Tribune Media Co.  
Twitter Inc.  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
United Auto Workers  
Verizon Communications Inc.  
Warner Media LLC  
eBay Inc.

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Antitrust Modernization Commission  
Commodity Futures Trading Commission  
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation  
Congressional Budget Office  
European Commission  
European Union  
Federal Communications Commission  
Federal Energy Regulatory

day of submissions. [Read full article »](#)

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A tribe countering Maine's suit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is pressing a federal court to declare that the state cannot lower water quality standards on the Penobscot River's main stem because it must be free from pollution so the tribe can maintain its fishing culture. [Read full article »](#)

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### FCC Queries Wireless Industry On Disaster Response

The Federal Communications Commission is seeking answers from the wireless industry on how cellphone service providers can better rebound from disasters and get communications up and running more quickly, the agency said Monday. [Read full article »](#)

### Independent ISPs Urge FCC To Revise Subsidy Offerings

Members of the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association held a meeting with legal advisers for the Federal Communications Commission last week, asking them to lower the commission's proposed speed threshold and offer subsidies to rate-of-return carriers in areas where the broadband service is below 10/1 Mbps. [Read full article »](#)

## WHITE COLLAR

### Woman Accused Of Being Russian Agent Set To Change Plea

A D.C. federal judge on Monday granted a joint request from federal prosecutors and a Russian woman accused of infiltrating organizations with political influence inside the U.S. to hold a hearing so she can change her previous "not guilty" plea. [Read full article »](#)

## EXPERT ANALYSIS

### Opinion

#### DOJ Speech May Leave SEP Implementers In Dire Straits

I suspect the true audience for the U.S. Department of Justice's disavowal last week of a 2013 policy statement on standard-essential patents is not the courts but rather the U.S. International Trade Commission, whose discretion to pressure standard implementers to accept onerous licensing terms will be tested in the coming years, says University of Minnesota Law School professor Thomas Cotter. [Read full article »](#)

### Top 10 Whistleblowing And Retaliation Events Of 2018

This year saw significant changes in the landscape of whistleblower and retaliation law, including a game-changing decision from the U.S. Supreme Court and the three largest bounty awards issued in the history of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, say Steven Pearlman and Meika Freeman of Proskauer Rose LLP. [Read full article »](#)

### Don't Overlook Canada's New Data Breach Notification Rules

The reach of Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act — which recently imposed new mandatory breach notification obligations — is far-ranging. U.S. companies that collect Canadian citizens' personal information should take note, say José Vega and Tyler Samsing of Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP. [Read full article »](#)

Commission

Federal Trade Commission

Food and Drug Administration

Government Accountability Office

Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians

Internal Revenue Service

International Trade Commission

Joint Committee on Taxation

NAFTA

National Institutes of Health

National Labor Relations Board

Navajo Nation

New York Attorney General's Office

New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Securities and Exchange Commission

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

U.S. Attorney's Office

U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Labor

U.S. Department of the Interior

U.S. Department of the Treasury

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. House of Representatives

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Navy

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

U.S. Supreme Court

Utah Attorney General's Office

## How To Help Realize A Tax Equity Market For Carbon Capture

In February, Congress amended Internal Revenue Code Section 45Q, creating a tax equity market that supports investment in carbon capture and storage projects. Additional guidance, like that proposed by the Carbon Capture Coalition, is needed in a number of key subject areas to unlock this market, says Hunter Johnston of Steptoe & Johnson LLP. [Read full article »](#)

## 2018 In Review: Significant White Collar Developments At DOJ

As the year comes to a close, attorneys at King & Spalding LLP look back at a few of the most notable developments at the U.S. Department of Justice, including corporate monitor guidance, a False Claims Act policy shift, foreign exchange prosecutions, cryptocurrency fraud and international cooperation developments. [Read full article »](#)

## Proposed FDA Drug Software Rules Strict On Pharma Cos.

If implemented, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's proposed framework for regulating prescription drug-use-related software would likely mean that pharmaceutical companies will need to exert more control over certain software applications and be more involved in software update processes, say attorneys at Ropes & Gray LLP. [Read full article »](#)

## LEGAL INDUSTRY

### Susman Godfrey Shatters Cravath Associate Bonus Standard

Three more law firms — Susman Godfrey LLP, Wigdor LLP and Selendy & Gay PLLC — are planning to exceed the market standard for associate bonuses previously set by trendsetter Cravath Swaine & Moore LLP, with Susman Godfrey saying that the lowest rung on its scale will pay \$10,000 more than the top bonuses given to Cravath associates. [Read full article »](#)

### John Gibbons, Former 3rd Circ. Chief Judge, Dies At 94

John J. Gibbons, a Gibbons PC name partner and former Third Circuit chief judge known as a champion of civil liberties, staunch constitutionalist and fierce critic of the death penalty, died Sunday at the age of 94, the law firm said. [Read full article »](#)

### Jay-Z Claims Movement In Arbitrator Diversity Request

Music mogul Jay-Z told a New York state court that the American Arbitration Association has agreed to work with him to ensure more African-American arbitrators would be available in the pool of potential people to hear his intellectual property dispute with Iconix Brand Group Inc. [Read full article »](#)

### Sonos Snags GC From Tribune A Week After Nexstar Deal

Smart speaker maker Sonos Inc. named Tribune Media Co.'s executive vice president and general counsel as its new chief legal officer on Monday, a week after Nexstar announced a \$6.4 billion deal to acquire the media company. [Read full article »](#)

## Interview

### 15 Minutes With Gap's Global General Counsel

Gap Inc. Global General Counsel Julie Gruber sees value in both formal and casual mentorship programs. Here, she describes how the company has made strides on diversity and inclusion and why being fast and flexible are crucial in the changing retail environment. [Read full article »](#)

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**To:** [Eduardo Ribas](#)  
**Subject:** Supreme Court Agrees To Reconsider "Auer" Deference  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 4:05:24 AM



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Tuesday, December 11, 2018



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The American Law Institute  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
The Gap Inc.  
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International Trade Commission

Joint Committee on Taxation

NAFTA

National Institutes of Health

National Labor Relations Board

Navajo Nation

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New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics

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Southern Ute Indian Tribe

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## PUBLIC POLICY

Tuesday, December 11, 2018



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Alibaba Group Holdings Ltd.

Amazon.com Inc.

American Arbitration Association

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

Apple Inc.

Association for Accessible Medicines

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Cable News Network Inc.

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Food Network

Ford Motor Co.

General Motors

Google Inc.

HSBC Holdings PLC

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing

Iconix Brand Group, Inc.

Intel Corp.

International Business Machines Corp.



## Australian Watchdog Calls For Digital Platform Regulation

Australia's competition and consumer protection watchdog raised concerns Monday over Facebook and Google's dominance and their effect on the media industry, calling for more regulatory oversight and other fixes for the digital platforms. [Read full article »](#)

## CYBERSECURITY & PRIVACY

### EU Greenlights Controversial Cross-Border Data Access Bill

The European Union is moving forward with a bill that will allow authorities in criminal proceedings to more easily reach across national boundaries for digital evidence, despite mixed support from member states and criticism from industry groups. [Read full article »](#)

### House Committee Slams Equifax Over 'Preventable' Breach

The U.S. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Monday bashed Equifax for what the lawmakers called an "entirely preventable" data breach last year that compromised more than 148 million consumers' personal information, saying that the credit reporting giant had allowed hundreds of security certificates to expire and was woefully unprepared to handle the incident. [Read full article »](#)

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### Trump's NAFTA Withdrawal Threat Irks Centrist Dems

A group of moderate Democratic lawmakers met with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on Monday and expressed their discontent with President Donald Trump's threat to withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement in order to force a vote on a revised version of the pact. [Read full article »](#)

### Looming Japan Trade Talks Tee Up Bitter Fight In Auto Sector

A top trade group representing U.S. automakers on Monday urged the Trump administration to pry open the Japanese market in upcoming trade talks with Tokyo just as labor advocates called for leaving automotive trade out of the talks altogether. [Read full article »](#)

## TAX

### Renewal Of Extenders Absent From Revised Year-End Tax Bill

A revised year-end tax package, released Monday by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas, diverges from an earlier version by declining to address so-called extenders, which would revive expired tax credits retroactively. [Read full article »](#)

## IMMIGRATION

### DHS Watchdog To Probe If Detention Caused Toddler's Death

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's internal watchdog has launched a probe into the death of a toddler who died soon after being released from an Immigration and Customs Enforcement lockup, a DHS spokesperson said Monday. [Read full article »](#)

### US Citizen Kids Ask High Court To Halt Dad's Deportation

The children of an unauthorized Mexican immigrant have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review whether they, as American citizens, can claim a violation of their constitutional rights due to their father's deportation. [Read full article »](#)

### AGs, Public Push Back On DHS 'Public Charge' Rule Change

The Trump administration's proposal to allow green card and visa applications to be denied based on the applicant's likelihood of using public benefits in the future drew nearly 200,000 public comments as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security kept its mailbox open Monday for the last

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LinkedIn Corp.  
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Microsoft Corporation  
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National Rifle Association of America  
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Sprint Nextel Corporation  
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T-Mobile USA Inc.  
The American Law Institute  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
The Gap Inc.  
The Wireless Internet Service Providers Association  
Tribune Media Co.  
Twitter Inc.  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
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Verizon Communications Inc.  
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## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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Congressional Budget Office  
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Federal Communications Commission  
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## PUBLIC POLICY

Tuesday, December 11, 2018



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EisnerAmper LLP

Entergy Corp.

Equifax Inc.

Exxon Mobil Corp.

Facebook

Faculty Athletics Representatives Association

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV

Food Network

Ford Motor Co.

General Motors

Google Inc.

HSBC Holdings PLC

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing

Iconix Brand Group, Inc.

Intel Corp.

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PAREXEL International Corporation  
Planned Parenthood Federation  
Power Solutions International Inc.  
Public Service Enterprise Group Inc.  
QUALCOMM Inc.  
ROC Nation LLC  
Shanghai Stock Exchange Ltd.  
Shenzhen Stock Exchange  
Sierra Club  
Snap Inc.  
Sonos Inc.  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Sprint Nextel Corporation  
State Bar of Texas  
T-Mobile USA Inc.  
The American Law Institute  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
The Gap Inc.  
The Wireless Internet Service Providers Association  
Tribune Media Co.  
Twitter Inc.  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
United Auto Workers  
Verizon Communications Inc.  
Warner Media LLC  
eBay Inc.

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Internal Revenue Service

International Trade Commission

Joint Committee on Taxation

NAFTA

National Institutes of Health

National Labor Relations Board

Navajo Nation

New York Attorney General's Office

New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Securities and Exchange Commission

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

U.S. Attorney's Office

U.S. Department of Energy

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Labor

U.S. Department of the Interior

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Gap Inc. Global General Counsel Julie Gruber sees value in both formal and casual mentorship programs. Here, she describes how the company has made strides on diversity and inclusion and why being fast and flexible are crucial in the changing retail environment. [Read full article »](#)

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**Subject:** Supreme Court Agrees To Reconsider "Auer" Deference  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 11, 2018 4:48:04 AM



## PUBLIC POLICY

Tuesday, December 11, 2018



## TOP NEWS

**Supreme Court Agrees To Reconsider 'Auer' Deference**

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday agreed to reconsider a key precedent of administrative law that tells judges to defer to an agency's interpretation of its own ambiguous regulation, taking up a challenge to so-called Auer or Seminole Rock deference, which has been criticized by several conservative justices on the court. [Read full article »](#)

**9th Circ. Won't Stay Order Blocking Trump's Asylum Policy**

The Ninth Circuit on Friday rejected the Trump administration's request to allow its rule stripping asylum eligibility from migrants who cross the southern border outside a designated port of entry to go into effect while a lower court order blocking the policy is on appeal. [Read full article »](#)

**DC Circ. Balks At Reversing Pentagon Transgender Move**

Advocacy groups trying to overturn President Donald Trump's policy on transgender people serving in the military faced pointed queries from a D.C. Circuit panel on Monday as to why courts should not defer to the Pentagon's judgment on decisions regarding combat readiness. [Read full article »](#)

**Analysis****Narrowed EU Digital Tax Delays Pain For Nondigital Firms, Too**

The European Union's decision to drastically limit the scope of its digital tax proposal was welcome news to large multinational corporations in the online sector — as well as those that likely don't consider themselves digital companies. [Read full article »](#)

**Barr, Delrahim Offered Dueling Accounts Of AT&T Merger Talk**

President Donald Trump's announcement Friday naming Kirkland & Ellis LLP attorney William Barr to replace ousted Attorney General Jeff Sessions has rekindled interest in a contentious meeting between Barr and the heads of the U.S. Department of Justice's Antitrust Division that Barr once found "disturbing." [Read full article »](#)

## BANKING &amp; SECURITIES

**Hong Kong, China Exchanges Expand Mutual Access Program**

The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong and its Shanghai and Shenzhen equivalents said in a joint statement Sunday they have reached an agreement to enhance the mutual market access program between mainland China and Hong Kong. [Read full article »](#)

## ENERGY &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL

**NY Attorney General Seeks To Sink Exxon Climate Appeal**

New York's attorney general on Friday asked the Second Circuit to dismiss Exxon Mobil Corp.'s bid to halt the state's climate change probe into the energy giant, saying the investigation is completed and a civil enforcement action has already been filed based on the results. [Read full article »](#)

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 Gibbons PC  
 Herbert Smith Freehills  
 Hueston Hennigan  
 Jones Day  
 Kanji & Katzen  
 Kelly Remmel  
 King & Spalding  
 Kirkland & Ellis  
 Littler Mendelson  
 Lowenstein Sandler  
 Mayer Brown  
 McCarter & English  
 McDermott Will

## Sierra Prodded On Why It Didn't Challenge EPA Rule

D.C. Circuit judges on Monday questioned the Sierra Club on why it hasn't formally asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to rewrite a rule on how states handle public feedback on air quality monitoring plans if the group objects to the changes. [Read full article »](#)

## HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES

### Judge Mulls Several Outcomes For NY Opioid Surcharge Law

A Manhattan judge probed the pharmaceutical industry's attack on New York's \$600 million levy on the opioid industry and the state's defense of the law at a Monday hearing, asking questions that suggested a range of outcomes were on the table between letting the law be and striking it down. [Read full article »](#)

### FDA Hit With Suit Over Reporting Leeway For Clinical Trials

A New York University faculty member and a former U.S. Food and Drug Administration official have hit the agency with a suit challenging a rule they said relaxed the reporting requirements for researchers doing certain clinical trials. [Read full article »](#)

## MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

### Mass. Can't Ban Secret Recording Of Officials, Police

A blanket ban on secret audio recording in Massachusetts is unconstitutional when the person being recorded is a government official or a police officer performing their duties in public, a federal judge ruled Monday, granting a partial win to a conservative provocateur journalist and two activists in two cases. [Read full article »](#)

### Trump Campaign, WikiLeaks Seek To Kill DNC Hacking Suit

The Trump campaign and WikiLeaks asked a New York federal court to toss the Democratic National Committee's suit over a pre-election email hack, saying Friday that the suit runs counter to the First Amendment and doesn't sufficiently allege they violated privacy and intellectual property laws. [Read full article »](#)

## EMPLOYMENT

### NLRB Aims To Speed Up Case-Handling By 20 Percent

The National Labor Relations Board is aiming to cut the time it takes to resolve labor disputes by a fifth over the next four years, according to a strategic plan the agency released Friday. [Read full article »](#)

### NLRB Extends Comment Deadline For Joint Employer Rule

The National Labor Relations Board on Monday again pushed back the deadline for public feedback on its proposed rule for analyzing whether two businesses jointly employ workers, giving potential commenters until mid-January to give feedback. [Read full article »](#)

### Ex-Nuclear Workers Need Clear Info For DOL Claims: GAO

The Government Accountability Office has said the U.S. Department of Labor must provide clearer information to former nuclear weapons production workers on how they can seek monetary compensation for illnesses caused by exposure to toxins. [Read full article »](#)

## COMPETITION

### EU Approves Germany's €350M Per Year Rail Freight Plan

Europe's competition enforcer said Monday that it has approved Germany's plan to invest up to €350 million (\$397.5 million) per year over the next several years to help move freight traffic from the roads to the rails, after finding the scheme is in line with the bloc's state aid rules. [Read full article »](#)

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PAREXEL International Corporation  
Planned Parenthood Federation  
Power Solutions International Inc.  
Public Service Enterprise Group Inc.  
QUALCOMM Inc.  
ROC Nation LLC  
Shanghai Stock Exchange Ltd.  
Shenzhen Stock Exchange  
Sierra Club  
Snap Inc.  
Sonos Inc.  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Sprint Nextel Corporation  
State Bar of Texas  
T-Mobile USA Inc.  
The American Law Institute  
The Bank of Nova Scotia  
The Gap Inc.  
The Wireless Internet Service Providers Association  
Tribune Media Co.  
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U.S. Department of the Interior

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# The Daily 202



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## Flynn sentencing memo hints at how

# much Mueller knows that we still don't



Mueller suggests no jail time for Michael Flynn, cites his 'substantial assistance'



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** The most striking part of Bob Mueller's sentencing memo recommending Michael Flynn serve no prison time, because of his "substantial" assistance to "several ongoing



**investigations,” is how much got blacked out. It’s a reminder of how many shoes might still drop.**

The special counsel revealed in [a 13-page court filing](#) late Tuesday night that President Trump’s former national security adviser has given 19 interviews to his office or other Justice Department attorneys, in addition to providing “documents and communications.”

**Tantalizingly, Mueller teases that “the defendant has provided substantial assistance in a criminal investigation.” Then there are 22 fully redacted lines of text.** That is in addition to the special counsel’s probe of “any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald J. Trump.”

Mueller has asked for several postponements in making a sentencing recommendation since Flynn pleaded guilty to a single felony count of making false statements to the FBI last December, a full year ago now. **Just how much he’s gotten out of the career intelligence officer has been a closely held secret. Now we know it’s a lot, but what exactly Mueller got remains a mystery.**

“While this [document] seeks to provide a comprehensive description of the benefit the government has thus far obtained from the defendant’s substantial assistance, some of that benefit may not be fully realized at this time because the investigations in which he has provided

assistance are ongoing,” said Mueller.

**The special counsel tells the judge that Flynn flipping when he did prompted others to cooperate and was “particularly valuable because he was one of the few people with long-term and firsthand insight regarding events and issues under investigation.”**

Flynn is one of five Trump aides who have pleaded guilty as a result of the special counsel’s investigation. Mueller, who fought in Vietnam as a Marine, noted that Flynn spent 33 years in the Army, including five years of combat duty, before retiring as a three-star lieutenant general.

**“The defendant’s record of military and public service distinguish him from every other person who has been charged,” the special counsel wrote.**

“However, senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards. The defendant’s extensive government service should have made him particularly aware of the harm caused by providing false information to the government, as well as the rules governing work performed on behalf of a foreign government.”

**-- Flynn's son celebrated the news that his dad probably won't go to prison:**



**-- Mueller will file two more documents on Friday:** He is scheduled to outline details of Michael Cohen's cooperation in a letter to the judge overseeing the former Trump consigliere's sentencing. He's also due to submit a filing explaining the ways that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort breached his plea agreement by being dishonest with prosecutors.



What happened between Flynn, Trump and Comey? The Fact Checker's Timeline

**-- Mueller biographer Garrett Graff [outlines 14 questions](#) this morning that the special counsel knows the answers to and that we don't:** “Decoding Mueller’s 17-month investigation has been a publicly frustrating exercise, as individual puzzle pieces, like Flynn's sentencing memo, often don’t hint at the final assembled picture—nor even tell us if we’re looking at a single interlocking puzzle, in which all the pieces are related, or multiple, separate, unrelated ones,” Graff

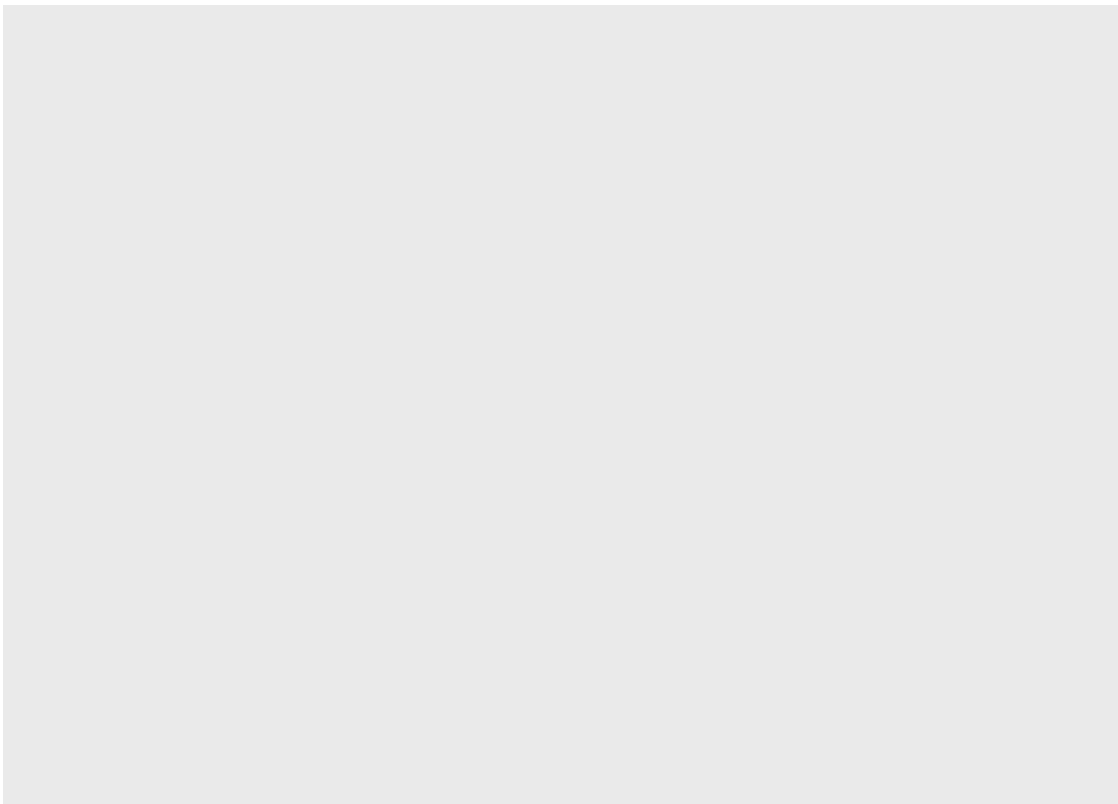
writes in a new piece [for Wired magazine](#). “Mueller’s careful, methodical strategy often only reveals itself in hindsight, as the significance of previous steps becomes clear with subsequent ones.”

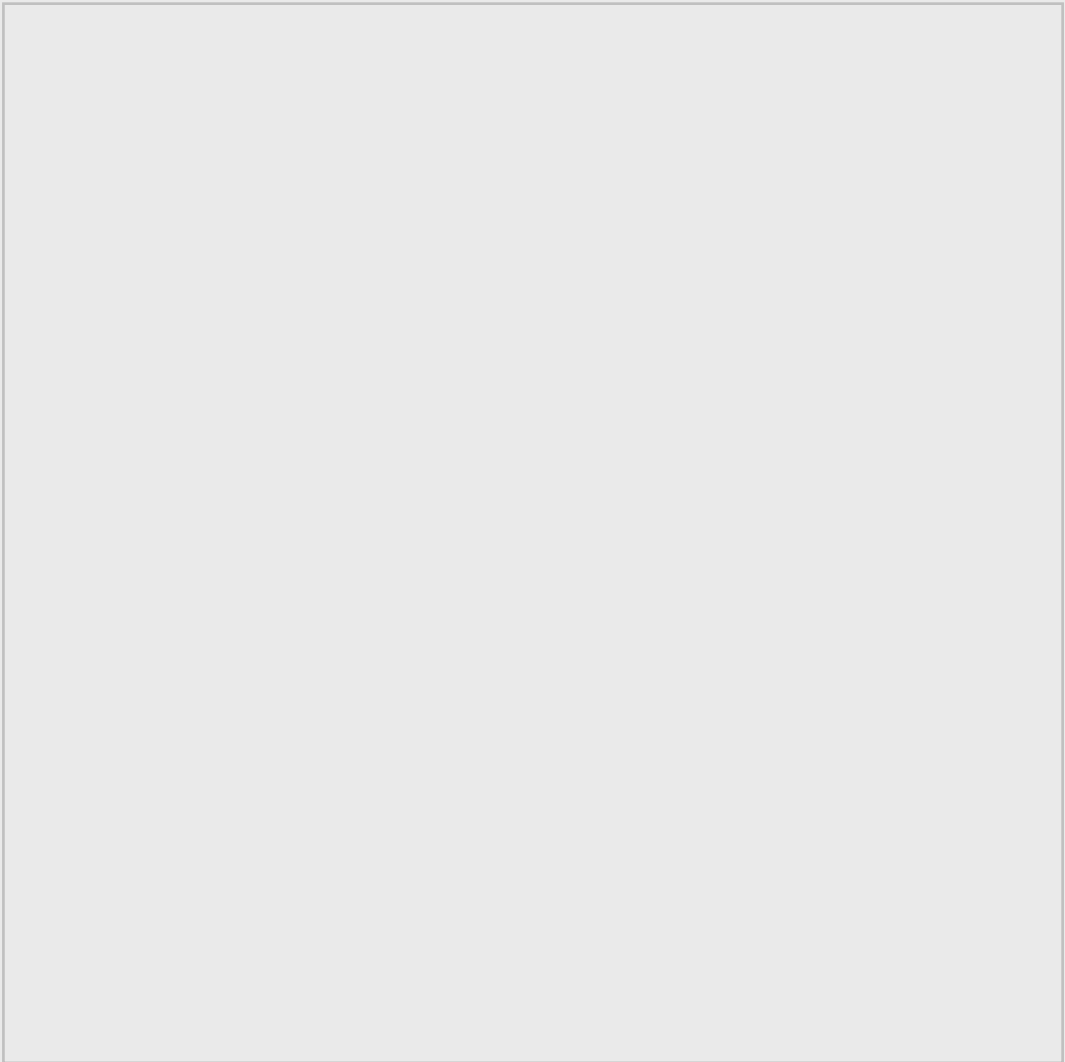
1. Is Matt Whitaker overseeing the Russia probe—and is his appointment as attorney general even legal?
2. Is Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross involved in any of this?
3. How closely related is the investigation of the 2016 election to the Trump Organization’s financial scandals?
4. How did Trump himself, and the Trump family, react to Cohen’s updates on various schemes?
5. What has Felix Sater told Mueller?
6. What has George Nader told Mueller?
7. What happens to Cozy Bear?
8. Who is the (unindicted) Atlanta traveler?
9. Why was Trump’s team so concerned about the transition documents?
10. How much more of the Steele Dossier is true?
11. Is it a coincidence that the Internet Research Agency scheduled a “Down with Hillary” rally in New York, weeks in advance, for the day after WikiLeaks dumped the DNC emails?
12. Why isn’t Mueller prosecuting Maria Butina and Elena Alekseevna Khusyaynova?
13. Why is Mueller charging Michael Cohen?
14. Was the Guardian correct in reporting that Paul

Manafort met with Julian Assange?

**-- Rudy Giuliani said he's not concerned that Flynn has given Mueller anything that would implicate Trump:** "If he had information to share with Mueller that hurt the president, you would know it by now," the president's attorney [told NBC](#). "There's a Yiddish word that fits. They don't have bupkis."

**-- New Yorker writer Jeff Toobin thinks Trump ought to be nervous about Mueller's assertion that "senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards."** "I would be a little nervous if I were the people involved in the obstruction of justice investigation, starting, of course, with the president of the United States," he said [on CNN](#).





CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

# The power to strengthen communities

We work every day to finance progress and spur entrepreneurship. To help people build financial know-how and strengthen their communities. The power to make a difference is in all of us.





Acting attorney general Matt Whitaker departs a Medal of Freedom ceremony at the White House. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS:**

**-- More than 400 former DOJ employees signed a statement opposing Whitaker's appointment as acting attorney general. [NBC News's Pete Williams reports](#):** "Because Whitaker hasn't been confirmed by the Senate, his qualifications have not been publicly reviewed and there's been no vetting for potential conflicts of



interest, they say. ... The former DOJ employees call on Trump to nominate someone to succeed Jeff Sessions, whom the president fired last month, and, in the meantime, to put a Senate-confirmed person in the acting attorney general position. Protect Democracy, which organized the effort, said that the signatories 'have served under administrations of both parties' and that the vast majority were non-partisan career civil servants."

**-- Whitaker has provided no clarity on how he is handling potential conflicts of interest.** [CNN's Laura Jarrett reports](#): "For now, officials in Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's office continue to handle management of [Mueller's investigation], but Whitaker's ability to pull rank as the acting attorney general and overrule Rosenstein's judgment may prove crucial in coming weeks as the investigation winds down — leading to mounting questions about what steps Whitaker has taken, or not taken, to heed any ethics advice after now serving 28 days as the nation's top law enforcement officer. Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee renewed their concerns Tuesday, writing in a letter to Justice officials that ... 'the Department has not produced prior versions of Mr. Whitaker's financial disclosures, any ethics agreements he entered into with the Department, or any other ethics-related counseling he has received.' "

**-- Trump ally Roger Stone invoked the Fifth Amendment to avoid sharing documents and**

**testimony with the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

[Politico's Kyle Cheney reports](#): “ ‘Mr. Stone's invocation of his Fifth Amendment privilege must be understood by all to be the assertion of a Constitutional right by an innocent citizen who denounces secrecy,’ Stone's attorney, Grant Smith, said. ... In [his letter], Stone's attorney said his client simply wants his information aired in public, and not subject to selective leaks that marked his closed-door testimony to the House Intelligence Committee last year.”

**-- Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump's tweets praising Stone for not testifying against him and berating Michael Cohen add to “a growing body of evidence that the President is attempting to obstruct justice.”**

“We must ensure that the Mueller investigation proceeds without political interference, and that any and all acts of obstruction are exposed, either by Mueller in his report or by the Congress,” Schiff said in a statement. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))

**-- Former Trump campaign aide Sam Nunberg will meet next month with the Senate Intelligence Committee.** [Robert Costa reports](#): “Nunberg confirmed his pending meeting in an interview Tuesday with The Post, saying, ‘I’m happy to cooperate and appear’ for what is likely to be a closed session with committee staffers. ... Nunberg’s visit is the latest sign that the Senate Intelligence Committee’s investigation is going to

carry into the new year.”

**-- New White House counsel Pat Cipollone will start in the role on Monday after a nearly two-month delay.**

[From Politico's Eliana Johnson](#): “Even before assuming his official duties, Cipollone has reached out to several lawyers to staff an office responsible for everything from judicial nominations to federal litigation to presidential pardons. ... The new hires will begin a badly needed rebuilding of the counsel’s office. ... **A longer-than-expected security clearance process, however, prevented Cipollone from assuming the job**, even as the Mueller probe advances and a House Democratic majority draws ever nearer to assuming power. That has left Cipollone playing catchup as he tries to fill vacant posts in an office whose staff numbers in the dozens.”

**-- Another high-ranking FBI official who played key roles in the investigations into Hillary Clinton’s email server and the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russia is leaving the bureau.** [The Wall Street Journal's Byron Tau reports](#): “Bill Priestap, who currently serves as assistant director of the [FBI’s] counterintelligence division, will leave his post by the end of the year. ... Mr. Priestap’s retirement is unrelated to the controversies over the handling of the 2016 investigations, according to a person familiar with the matter. ... **After Mr. Priestap’s departure, none of the high-ranking bureau officials involved in the two**

investigations will remain with the bureau.”



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



Republican secretary of state candidate Brad Raffensperger greets supporters in Augusta, Ga. (Michael Holahan/Augusta Chronicle/AP)

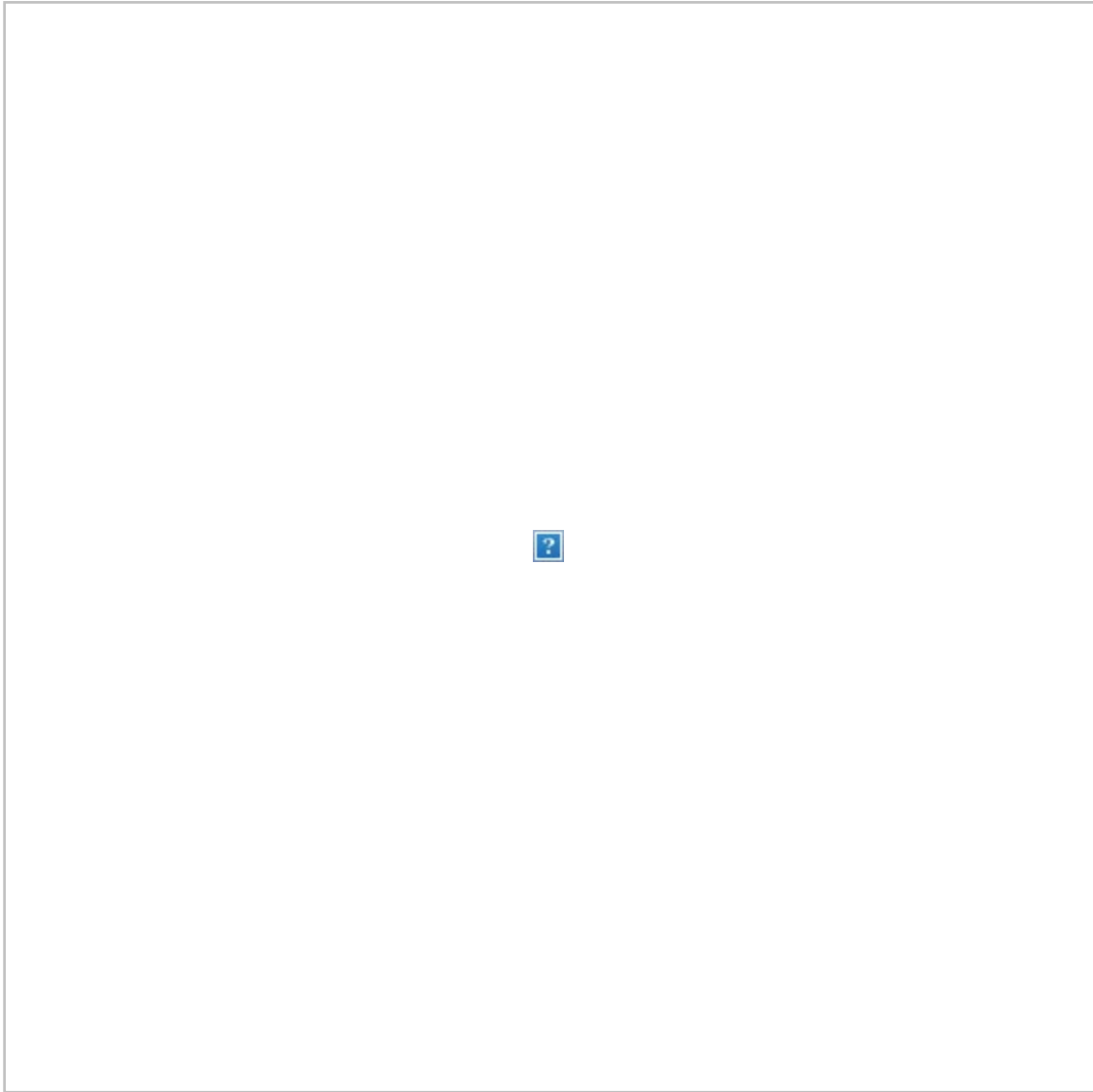
**-- Republican Brad Raffensperger won the runoff race to become Georgia's secretary of state, defeating former Democratic congressman John Barrow. [Matt Viser reports](#):** "Raffensperger's election continues a losing streak for Georgia Democrats, who have not won a statewide election since 2010, and ensures that stricter election laws pushed by state Republicans remain in

place barring successful legal challenges. ... The two candidates were separated by less than 20,000 votes in the first election, with Raffensperger running slightly ahead. Democrats were unable to harness the energy that they had during the November election, however, and Raffensperger led by more than four points Tuesday with 98 percent of precincts reporting. **Turnout appeared to be only about a third of the November number.**"

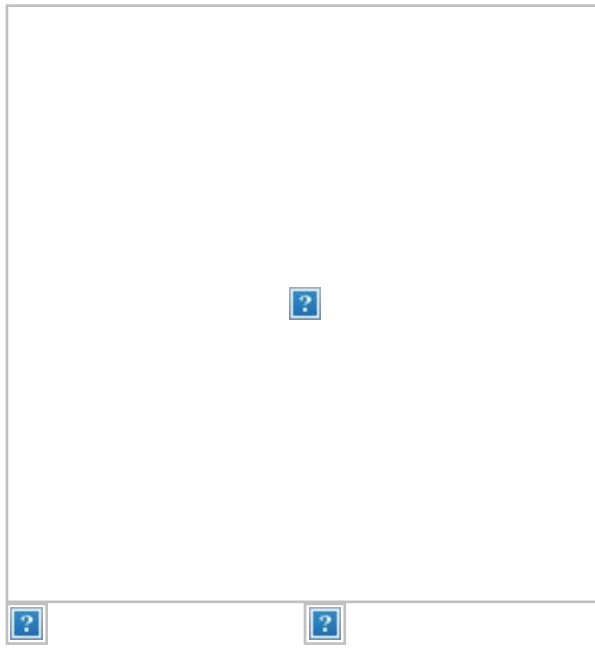
**-- In another runoff, Little Rock elected an African American mayor, Frank Scott Jr., a 35-year-old banker who was formerly state highway commissioner.** The Arkansas capital has had two previous black mayors, but they were appointed by fellow members of the city council. ([KARK](#))

**-- The fate of the Weekly Standard — which has continued to critique Trump from the right long after most other conservative publications — is uncertain.** [CNN's Oliver Darcy reports](#): "The magazine's precarious position comes after its leadership spent months searching for a buyer ... However, [publisher] MediaDC recently informed The Weekly Standard's leadership that the company was no longer interested in a sale ... Instead, Ryan McKibben, the chairman of MediaDC, asked to meet with [Editor in Chief Stephen Hayes] in a meeting tentatively scheduled for late next week ... [He] also requested the entire staff of The Weekly Standard be made available following the meeting. That request,

coupled with MediaDC's Monday announcement that its other conservative news organization, The Washington Examiner, would be expanding its magazine into a weekly publication, has left The Weekly Standard's leadership worrying."



Trump International Hotel is seen in Washington. (Alex Brandon/AP)



## GET SMART FAST:

1. **The attorneys general of Maryland and D.C. have issued subpoenas to as many as 13 of Trump's private entities in their emoluments lawsuit involving Trump International Hotel.** The subpoenas seek information on which foreign governments have paid the Trump Organization, data the attorneys general hope will bolster their argument that the president is violating the Constitution by improperly benefiting from his office. ([Jonathan O'Connell, Ann E. Marimow and David A. Fahrenthold](#))
2. **France's nationwide protests are the latest backlash against taxes meant to fight climate change.** French President Emmanuel Macron's



decision to temporarily suspend a set of carbon taxes is another example of how politically unpopular such environmental policies can be. ([Steven Mufson and James McAuley](#))

3. **Many climate scientists and policy experts have become pessimistic about countries adopting proposals robust enough to slow the advancement of climate change.** At the U.N. climate conference in Poland, several major countries are expected to announce they have failed to meet the targets they set in Paris three years ago. ([Steven Mufson](#))
4. **The Justice Department charged four people with tax evasion in connection with the 2016 Panama Papers.** The indictment, centered on accusations that the people spent decades hiding tens of millions of dollars from the IRS, marks the first time U.S. officials have issued charges related to the Panama Papers. ([Devlin Barrett](#))
5. **A new report alleges Leslie Moonves misled investigators and destroyed evidence during a probe into the sexual misconduct allegations against the former CBS CEO.** Lawyers who conducted the inquiry said CBS had justification to deny Moonves his \$120 million severance after he “engaged in multiple acts of serious nonconsensual

sexual misconduct in and outside of the workplace, both before and after he came to CBS in 1995.” ([New York Times](#))

6. **Nikki Haley plans to stay in New York and work on a second book after stepping down as U.N. ambassador.** The former South Carolina governor said she would return to the state, where she recently sold her home, after her son finishes high school. ([Charleston Post and Courier](#))
7. **A West Palm Beach, Fla., trial that was expected to include testimony from women who have accused billionaire Jeffrey Epstein of sexual abuse was settled moments before it was supposed to begin.** Epstein apologized for making “false and hurtful allegations” against Bradley Edwards, the attorney for some of Epstein’s accusers. Epstein had claimed Edwards ginned up the sexual molestation accusations as part of a fundraising scheme. ([Lori Rozsa](#))
8. **Interest in becoming a police officer is on the decline across the United States.** In Seattle, where the starting salary is \$79,000, applications have dropped by nearly 50 percent. And departments are struggling to retain new officers, some of whom leave after less than a year. ([Tom Jackman](#))



Bob Dole stands to pay respect to George H.W. Bush

## **BUSH 41 REMEMBERED:**

**-- Mourners gathered at the Capitol to honor George H.W Bush before his funeral today at Washington National Cathedral. [Marc Fisher, Marissa J. Lang and Elise Viebeck report](#):** “They came to attention as World War II veterans, including former senator Bob Dole, who rose from his wheelchair, jaw quivering, to deliver a quick, crisp salute. Mostly, they offered a final

farewell to George Herbert Walker Bush as fellow Americans, eager to honor decency, moderation and a commitment to making things work, all of which he embodied. The Capitol Rotunda was open to all Tuesday, and they came in a manner befitting the 41st president — not in huge numbers, but steadily; with grace and seriousness of purpose; with nothing disparaging to say, but with a recaptured sense that, even now, we're all in this together.”

**-- Bush's funeral has created an informal reunion for former members of his administration who have gathered to celebrate his life.** [The New York Times's Peter Baker reports](#): “More than a quarter-century after the original Bush administration left Washington and nearly a decade after the departure of the second, the men and women who once ran the nation and, by extension, the world were back. On the eve of the state funeral for President George Bush, they caught up, shared stories and honored those no longer around. ‘Everybody’s a mixture of sad and joyful because we’re celebrating a great life,’ said Jonathan Bush, the younger brother of the 41st president and uncle of the 43rd.”

**-- The United States will recognize a national day of mourning today for Bush.** [From Kimberly Winston](#): “Flags will be at half-staff; federal offices and the stock market will be closed. Millions of people, here and abroad, are expected to watch a live broadcast of Bush’s

state funeral from Washington National Cathedral.”

**-- Bush’s death has sparked debates about his legacy on race issues.** [From Sean Sullivan](#): “During his first campaign for the Senate in Texas, [Bush] opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark law banning many forms of racial discrimination. But four years later, as a member of the House, he voted for watershed legislation making it illegal to refuse to sell or rent housing on the basis of race. When he ran for president two decades after that, Bush and his allies made an African American man convicted of murder and rape a central focus of his campaign’s effort to portray his opponent as weak on crime — stoking a controversy that [reemerged](#) in the racially charged atmosphere of this year’s midterm elections.”

**-- Trump’s use of a motorcade to visit George W. Bush at Blair House, which is 250 yards from the White House, triggered some light criticism.** [David Nakamura reports](#): “The Trumps spent 23 minutes visiting with Bush and his wife, Laura, by all accounts a cordial meeting in which the former president exchanged kisses on the cheek with the current first lady at the curb. ... The need for the motorcade, however, prompted questions, and a healthy dose of speculation, about why the Trumps were unable — or unwilling — to simply walk across the street. ‘Presidents, including the last one, have made the walk before,’ observed Edward Price, who served as

National Security Council spokesman in the Obama administration. ... [But in] her autobiography 'Becoming,' former first lady Michelle Obama wrote that the Secret Service sometimes requested she or her husband 'take the motorcade instead of walking in the fresh air' to Blair House for security reasons."



Graham: Saudi crown prince 'complicit' in Khashoggi murder

## **KHASHOGGI FALLOUT:**

**-- Contradicting assertions from Trump and members**

**of his Cabinet, Republican senators said a briefing from CIA Director Gina Haspel on the killing of Post contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi has convinced them of the Saudi crown prince's involvement.** [Shane Harris and Karoun Demirjian report:](#)

“ ‘There’s not a smoking gun — there’s a smoking saw,’ said Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), referring to the bone saw that investigators believe was used to dismember Khashoggi ... Armed with classified details provided by [Haspel], senators shredded the arguments put forward by senior administration officials who had earlier insisted that the evidence of [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's] alleged role was inconclusive. The gulf that has emerged between Republican lawmakers and the president over how to respond to the journalist’s killing appeared to widen after Tuesday’s briefing, with Graham, one of Trump’s closest Senate allies, announcing that he was no longer willing to work with the crown prince, whom the White House regards as one of its most important allies in the Middle East.

“In recent days, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have said that no single piece of evidence irrefutably links Mohammed to the killing. But the senators, in effect, said that did not matter, because the evidence they heard convinced them beyond the shadow of a doubt. **‘If the crown prince went in front of a jury, he would be convicted in 30 minutes,’ said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the chairman of the**

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee.** ... Graham leveled sharp criticism at Pompeo and Mattis, saying he thought they were 'following the lead of the president.' He called them 'good soldiers.' "

**-- The GOP senators essentially accused Trump of helping Saudi Arabia try to cover up the killing.** [From Aaron Blake](#): "Graham said Tuesday that you'd have to be 'willfully blind' to not know Mohammed was 'intricately involved' — a clear rebuke of Trump's argument that this whole thing resides in some kind of gray area. ... **'If they were in a Democratic administration,' Graham said of Pompeo and Mattis, 'I would be all over them for being in the pocket of Saudi Arabia.'** ... Corker also suggested that the briefing last week, which featured Pompeo and Mattis but not Haspel, was entirely misleading. When asked whether there was a difference in the message about Mohammed's culpability, Corker compared it to the 'difference between darkness and sunshine.' "

**-- Not all Republicans: A GOP congressman justified Trump's response to Khashoggi's killing by saying, "Journalists disappear all over the country."** [Felicia Sonmez reports](#): "[Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah)] echoed Trump, telling CNN's Brianna Keilar that 'no one can say' for certain what happened and maintaining that it is in U.S. interests not to allow the relationship with Saudi Arabia to rupture. 'We have to have a relationship with



some players that we don't agree with,' Stewart said. 'Journalists disappear all over the country. Twenty journalists have been killed in Mexico. You don't think it's happened in Turkey and China? Of course it does. And yet, we have to have a relationship with these individuals, or with these countries.' ”



'Tough' day for Wall Street as Dow plunges 799 points

## **THE TRADE WAR:**

**-- U.S. stock markets fell 3 percent as skepticism**

**grew of Trump's claims the United States and China reached a trade breakthrough during the G-20 summit.** "The reversals more than erased the tepid gains Monday in reaction to Trump's initial account of what he said were promises made by the Chinese government," [Damian Paletta, David J. Lynch and Josh Dawsey report.](#) "Three days after Trump emerged from his dinner with [Chinese President Xi Jinping] touting an 'incredible' deal, U.S. and Chinese officials were offering different accounts of whether there was a 90-day deadline for progress in new trade talks, the schedule for China to increase its purchases of American farm and industrial products, and Beijing's plans to reduce or eliminate specific tariffs. **While Trump tweeted a day after the meeting that China would 'reduce and remove' tariffs on U.S. automobiles, his aides acknowledged privately Tuesday that China had made no such commitment. 'Nobody knows what the deal is,' said one top White House adviser** ... Late Tuesday in Washington, after doubts about the deal blew into the open and the market plunged, the Trump administration was able to take some solace from a Chinese Ministry of Commerce statement that acknowledged hopes of meeting a 90-day timetable. ...

**"In a series of Twitter posts Tuesday, the president threatened to slap additional import penalties on Chinese products if China did not make major changes in its economic relationship with the United**

**States.** ‘President Xi and I want this deal to happen, and it probably will,’ Trump wrote. ‘But if not remember, I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power.’ Tuesday night, the president bore down on the theme, tweeting: ‘We are either going to have a REAL DEAL with China, or no deal at all — at which point we will be charging major Tariffs against Chinese product being shipped into the United States.’ ”

**-- “Once again this week, world leaders, U.S. lawmakers and jittery investors have been reminded that Trump’s words cannot always be trusted,”**

[Damian Paletta and Philip Rucker write](#). “Global markets demand consistency and reliability, but Trump delivers neither. Instead, he makes knee-jerk announcements that surprise investors, lawmakers and even some of his own aides and advisers, who sometimes find themselves reversing course depending on the president’s whims.”

**-- China is secretly funding the creation of a new Boeing satellite that incorporates technology used by the U.S. military.** [The Wall Street Journal’s Brian](#)

[Spegele and Kate O’Keeffe report](#): “About \$200 million flowed to the satellite project from a state-owned Chinese financial firm in a complex deal that used offshore companies to channel China’s money to Boeing. ... Such technology would help fill in a missing piece of the puzzle

for China as it seeks to secure its status as a superpower alongside the U.S. It would bolster China's burgeoning space program, as well as initiatives to dominate cutting-edge industries and expand its influence in the developing world. A web of U.S. laws effectively prohibits exporting satellite technology to China, and its satellites lag far behind those made in America."



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, with the help of the Mary and Don Miller family from Plainfield, Wis., flipped the switch to light the Christmas tree in the State Capitol rotunda last night in Madison. (Steve Apps/Wisconsin State Journal/AP)

## **MORE MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- The National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's campaign arm, was the victim of a cyberattack during the 2018 election cycle. [Ellen Nakashima and Shane Harris report](#):** “It wasn’t known whether a foreign government was behind the intrusion into the computer networks of the [NRCC], a person familiar with the case said. But the intruder was ‘sophisticated, based on their tactics and methods,’ and the intrusion ‘was clearly designed to hide the tracks of who it was,’ this person said ... The committee discovered the breach in April, said a person familiar with the case. Officials conducted an internal investigation, contacted the bureau within days and ‘gave the FBI everything they asked for,’ the person said. ... **The NRCC intrusion bears similarities to the DNC breach in 2016.**”

**-- Wisconsin Republicans are moving forward with attempts to [limit](#) the power of incoming Democrats, despite public criticism and protests. [Dan Simmons and Felicia Sonmez report](#):** “By Tuesday evening, the Wisconsin Senate had passed the least controversial of the three lame-duck bills, a measure on taxes and transportation that was approved by the GOP-controlled chamber on a party-line vote. ... Among the more hotly debated parts of the plan are provisions that would limit

early voting, which has helped Democrats, and restrict the ability of Gov.-elect Tony Evers (D) to make appointments. ... Opponents of the plan, meanwhile, continued to demonstrate at the State Capitol, including at a Christmas-tree lighting presided over by Gov. Scott Walker (R).” **Just after midnight, Republicans [approved](#) a plan to lock in place a Medicaid work requirement, which Evers said he intended to roll back.**

**-- Incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) suggested Democrats may refuse to seat a North Carolina Republican whose election is being investigated for possible fraud. [Mike DeBonis reports](#):** “[Hoyer] made the comments to reporters Tuesday as North Carolina election officials investigate whether an operative working on behalf of Republican candidate Mark Harris illegally collected incomplete ballots from voters. Hoyer’s comments, and the increasing criticism from other national Democrats, represent a new threat to Harris’s candidacy — suggesting that even if his apparent narrow victory is ultimately certified by the state, Harris could be subject to a months-long process in the House to determine whether he is ultimately sworn in.”

**-- A Trump-appointed federal prosecutor who has repeatedly prosecuted noncitizens for voting now has jurisdiction over the North Carolina case. [HuffPost’s Sam Levine and Ryan J. Reilly report](#):** “[U.S.

Attorney Robert] Higdon's office also issued a broad subpoena request earlier this year for millions of voter registration applications and absentee ballots, which the North Carolina Board of Elections voted to quash. Under scrutiny, Higdon's office delayed the subpoenas until after November's election. Election officials are now investigating apparent irregularities with absentee ballots in the midterm race."

**-- Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) is launching a new political action committee to recruit Republican women to run for Congress. [John Wagner reports](#):**

"Stefanik, who served for two years as the first female head of recruitment at the National Republican Congressional Committee, announced the formation of her PAC, which she said will field female candidates in GOP primaries. That is at odds with the practices of the NRCC, which does not get involved in contests among Republicans. Rep. Tom Emmer (Minn.), the newly elected NRCC chairman, made that point in a story in Roll Call, telling the publication 'if that's what Elise wants to do, then that's her call, her right.' 'But,' he added, 'I think that's a mistake.' Stefanik fired back Tuesday on Twitter, sharing the Roll Call story and highlighting Emmer's quote. 'NEWSFLASH,' she wrote. 'I wasn't asking for permission.' " ([Read more](#) from Power Up's Jackie Alemany this morning.)



Watch Beto O'Rourke's full concession speech

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Scoop: Obama met with Beto O'Rourke as the former Democratic Senate candidate weighs a presidential bid.** [Matt Viser reports](#): "The meeting, which was held Nov. 16 at the former president's offices in Foggy Bottom, came as former Obama aides have encouraged the Democratic House member to run, seeing him as capable of the same kind of inspirational



campaign that caught fire in the 2008 presidential election. The meeting was the first sign of Obama getting personally involved in conversations with O'Rourke ... TMZ, the Hollywood-based entertainment website, is now trailing O'Rourke; he is being swamped by calls from Democratic operatives eager to work for him, and other campaigns-in-the-making are eyeing his moves closely for any signs of his intentions. ...

**“O'Rourke was not among the slate of candidates that Obama endorsed during the midterm elections, but that came in part at O'Rourke's request.** Obama offered several times to help O'Rourke's campaign, including to come to Texas for a rally or to record robo-calls offering his endorsement. ... Obama even recorded a video that O'Rourke's campaign never utilized; it remained a subject of internal debate. O'Rourke ... hasn't forgotten his 2012 congressional campaign, when Obama — as well as another former president, Bill Clinton — endorsed his opponent, eight-term Democratic congressman Silvestre Reyes.”

**“Some of his closest friends ... expect (Beto) to run, with one of them putting 60-40 odds on his getting into the race.** O'Rourke has enlisted his longtime aide, David Wyson, to handle the barrage of incoming calls. But he has not made any commitments and has largely ignored requests coming from groups in the early-voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire eager to have him

visit.”

**-- Former Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick is expected to announce he will not pursue a 2020 run.** [Politico's Natasha Korecki, Kyle Cheney and Stephanie Murray report](#): “Patrick informed staff and advisers of his decision (yesterday), the sources say, with an announcement to come as soon as this week. A close ally of [Obama], the Democrat rejoined the private sector at Bain Capital after serving two terms as Massachusetts's governor. But he ramped up his political activity this fall in advance of a possible presidential bid, traveling to a handful of races across the country.”

**-- Stormy Daniels's attorney Michael Avenatti took himself out of the running for 2020.** [John Wagner reports](#): “ ‘I do not make this decision lightly — I make it out of respect for my family. But for their concerns, I would run,’ Avenatti said in a statement in which he did not detail the concerns. Avenatti said he would continue to represent Daniels ‘and others against Donald Trump and his cronies and will not rest until Trump is removed from office, and our republic and its values are restored.’ ”

**-- The DNC is finalizing a 2020 primary debate schedule that will allow lesser-known candidates to share a stage with front-runners.** [Michael Scherer reports](#): “Chairman Tom Perez and his team have been meeting for months with 2016 campaign advisers and

other stakeholders to find a way to improve the debate process, while accommodating the unusually large class of credible potential candidates, which could number more than 20 by spring. Perez has made clear to his staff that he would like the field to be presented in a way that initially mixes top-tier candidates with lesser-known ones.”

**-- Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, another potential 2020 candidate who just finished his term as chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, is trying to block Joe Manchin from becoming the top Democrat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee over the West Virginia senator's views on climate change.** [The Guardian's Ben Jacobs reports](#): “In an email sent out to supporters, Inslee insists: ‘Senate Democrats must not allow Joe Manchin to become the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I need your help to stop this.’ While the Washington Democrat offers some praise for Manchin ... he adds: ‘But on climate, he’s simply wrong.’ ...The effort shows Inslee making an effort to appeal to [progressives] as a potential ‘climate candidate’ if he chooses to run in 2020.”



Reporters swarm Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney at the White House. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

## **THE DOMESTIC AGENDA:**

**-- Mick Mulvaney has overseen a drastic curtailment of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's mission and oversight. [Robert O'Harrow Jr., Shawn Boburg and Renae Merle have an in-depth look at Mulvaney's tenure](#):** "One year after Mulvaney's arrival, he and his political aides have constrained the agency from

within, achieving what conservatives on Capitol Hill had for years been unable to do, according to agency data and interviews with career officials. Publicly announced enforcement actions by the bureau have dropped about 75 percent from average in recent years, while consumer complaints have risen to new highs, according to a Washington Post analysis of bureau data. Over the past year, the agency's workforce has dropped by at least 129 employees amid the largest exodus since its creation in 2010, agency data shows.

“Created by Congress to protect Americans from financial abuses, the bureau under Mulvaney has adopted the role of promoting ‘free markets’ and guarding the rights of banks and financial firms as well as those of consumers, according to statements by Mulvaney and bureau documents. ... The Senate this week is expected to confirm a new agency director, Kathy Kraninger, an associate director at the Office of Management and Budget, where Mulvaney splits his time as director. But Democrats have pledged to examine Mulvaney's tenure at the consumer protection bureau after they take control of the House in January.”

**-- The future of a multimillion-dollar contract to research new HIV treatments has been thrown into question over the Trump administration's opposition to the lab's use of fetal tissue. [Amy Goldstein reports](#):**  
“The turmoil over the National Institutes of Health contract

with the University of California at San Francisco is part of a building battle between conservatives opposed to research using fetal tissue and scientists who say the material is vital to developing new therapies for diseases from AIDS to Parkinson's. ... Last week, an NIH contracting official told the principal investigator at UCSF that the government was ending the seven-year contract midstream and that the decision was coming from the 'highest levels,' according to a virologist familiar with the events. Five days later, the university received a letter from the AIDS division of NIH's National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases saying the government would continue the contract for 90 days rather than the expected year-long renewal, with no forecast of its prospects after that."

**-- A government task force recommended ways to make the Postal Service more profitable, including reconsidering how e-commerce packages are priced.**

[Rachel Siegel reports](#): "But it did not go so far as to say the financially strapped Postal Service is losing money to Amazon, a company which contracts services from the Postal Service and that has consistently drawn Trump's ire. Even though the 70-page report does not specifically cite its contract with Amazon, it does recommend a reevaluation of the pricing for e-commerce packages and other non-essential mail shipped by companies such as Amazon." (Amazon.com chief executive Jeff Bezos also owns The Post.)

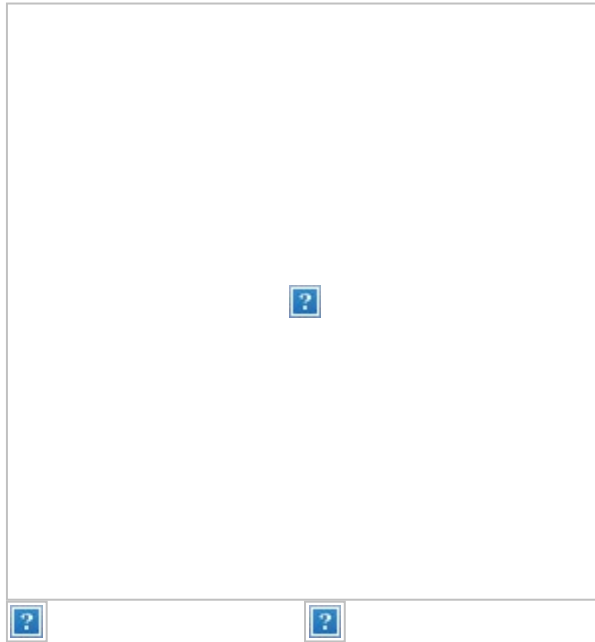
**-- Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) voiced confidence the chamber's criminal justice bill would pass "overwhelmingly" if Mitch McConnell allowed a vote on it.** [John Wagner reports](#): "Grassley said that he has met a target for support set by McConnell and that senators should take up the legislation by the end of the year, arguing that Republicans could even delay the confirmation of some judicial nominees to create more time. ... Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) ... said support among the 49-member Democratic caucus is 'solid,' though he stopped short of guaranteeing that every Democrat would vote for the bill. Grassley argued that waiting until next year would hurt the chances of passing the bill."

**-- A native-born U.S. citizen was held for weeks for potential deportation to Jamaica.** [Isaac Stanley-Becker reports](#): "[Peter Sean Brown] had been accused of a probation violation after testing positive for marijuana. But instead of returning home with a court date, or passing a few days in custody, Brown would spend weeks behind bars, battling his way through a labyrinthine immigration nightmare made all the more baffling by his citizenship."

**-- Google CEO Sundar Pichai's congressional testimony has been rescheduled for Dec. 11 because of George H.W. Bush's funeral.** The House Judiciary Committee is expected to question Pichai on

Republican allegations the search engine is unfairly biased against conservatives. ([Tony Romm](#))

## **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**



Trump touted his gentleman's agreement with Xi on Twitter this morning after the markets tanked yesterday:





The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee continued to criticize Trump for his tweets about Michael Cohen and Roger Stone:



Trump offered a message of "I told you so" to a European ally:



Meanwhile, BuzzFeed News’s deputy director of breaking news mocked Trump's description of himself as a “Tariff Man”:



The president and the first lady met a pair of their predecessors at the Blair House:



One of Bush 41's sons thanked Bob Dole after he stood from his wheelchair to salute the casket of his former political rival:



From a New York Times reporter:



From an NBC News host:

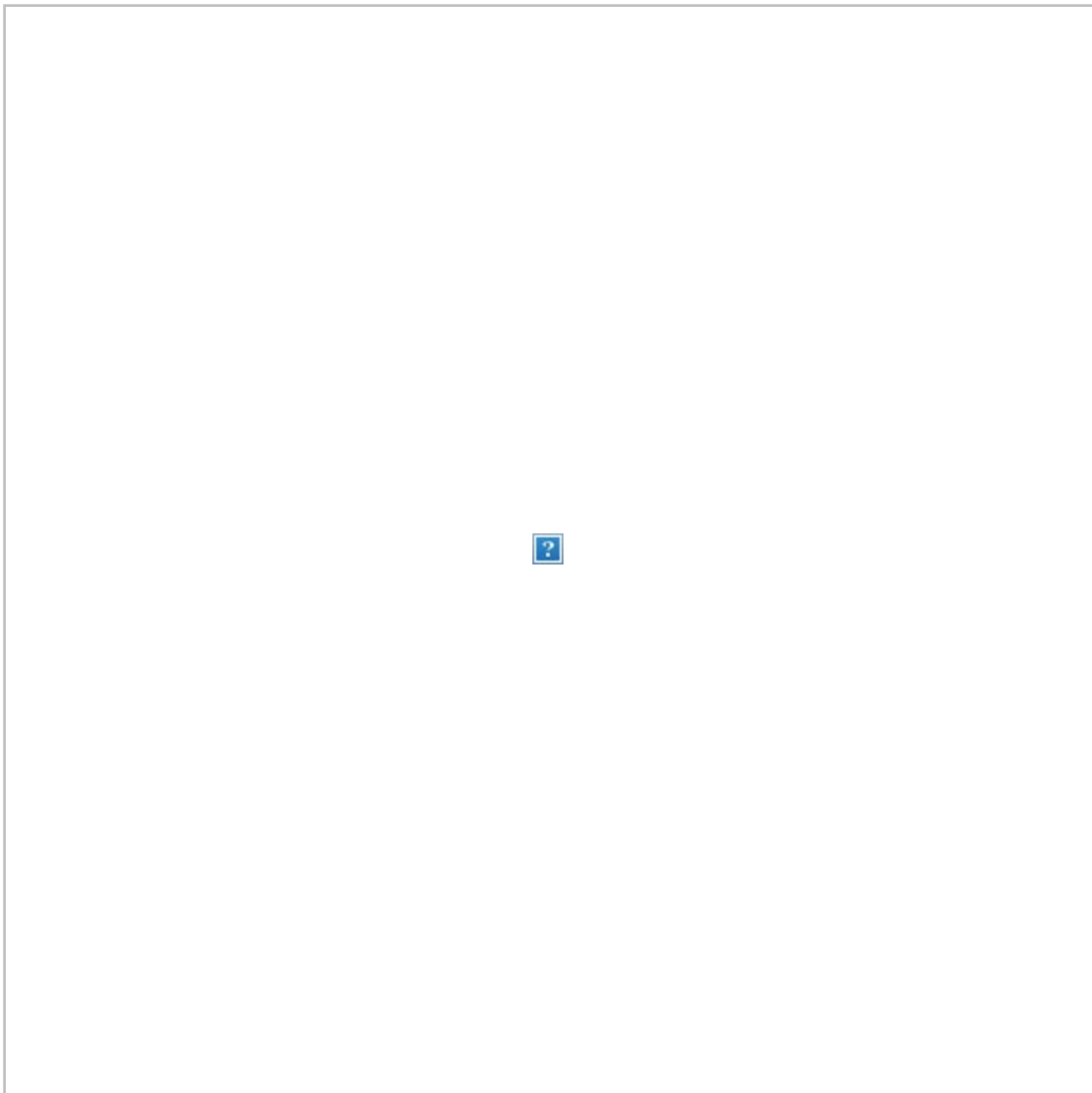


Republican officials and lawmakers are at odds over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, per a CNN reporter:





Rudy Giuliani falsely blamed Twitter after a digital marketing director in Atlanta [purchased](#) an Internet domain to incorporate an anti-Trump message into Giuliani's tweet about the G-20 summit:

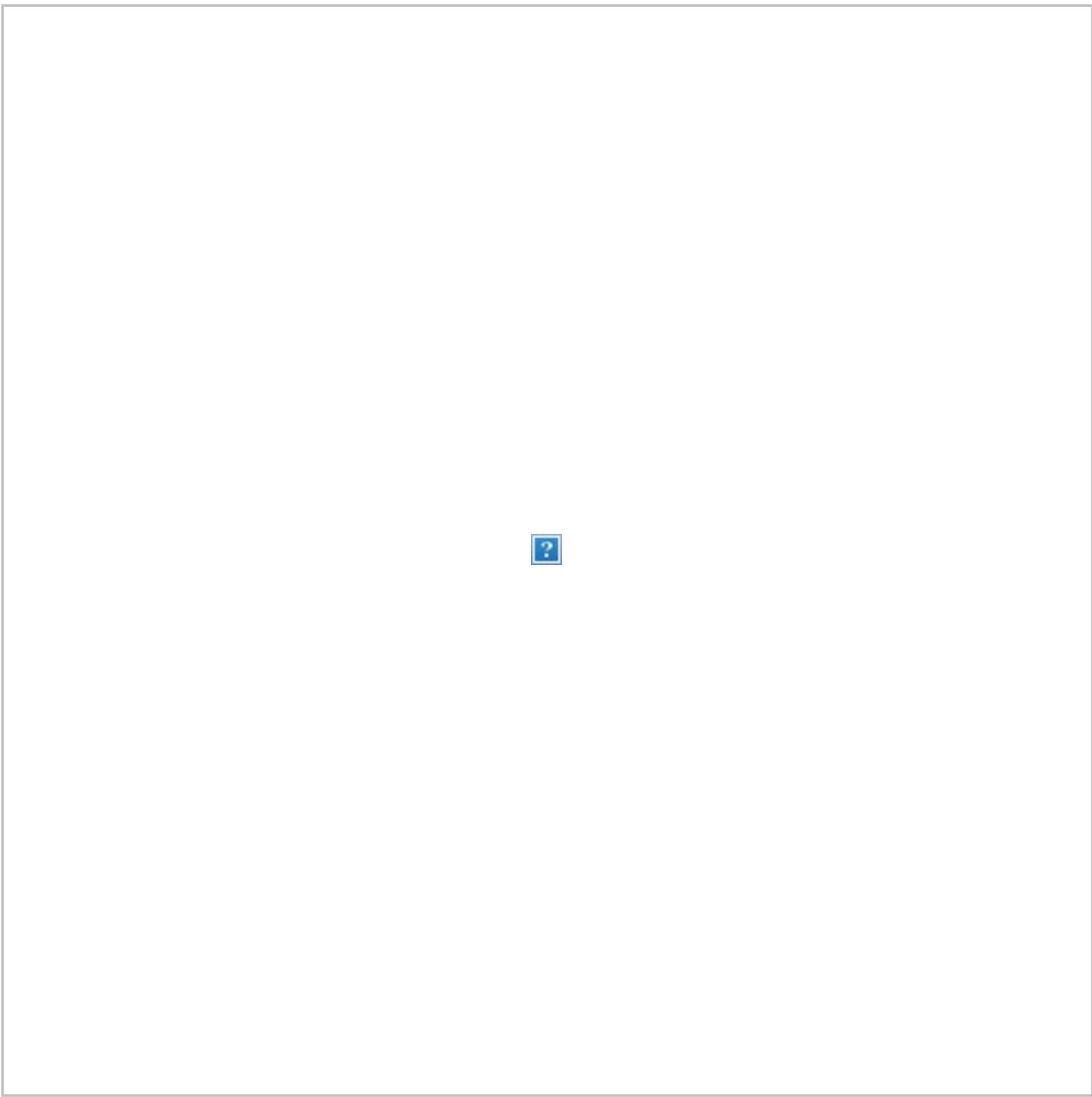


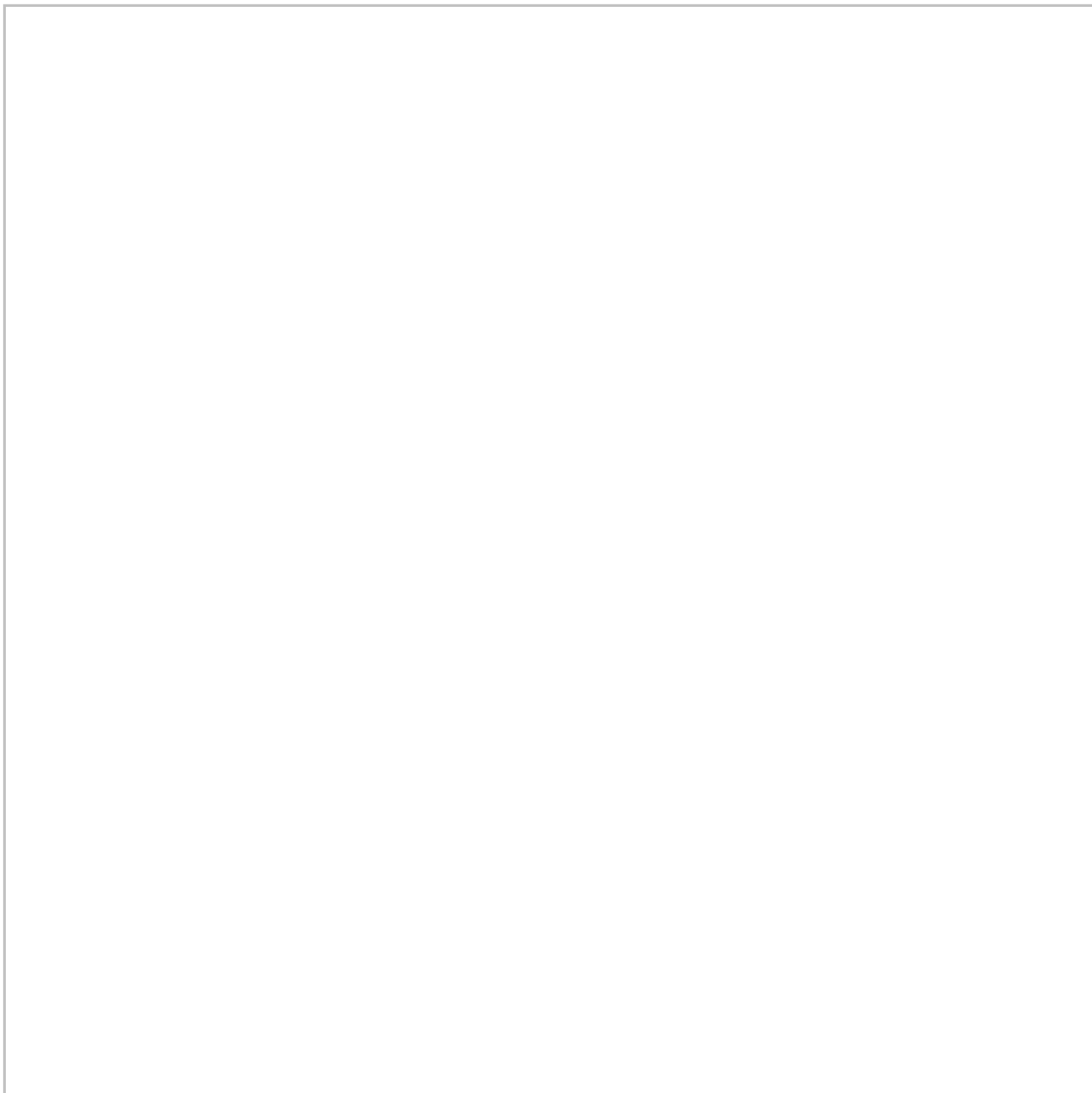
The Pentagon had a rather misleading typo in a statement on the troop deployment at the border, per a BuzzFeed News reporter:



(Defense officials quickly issued a correction.)

Wisconsin's Democratic senator spoke out against recent moves by the state legislature to limit the power of the incoming Democratic governor:





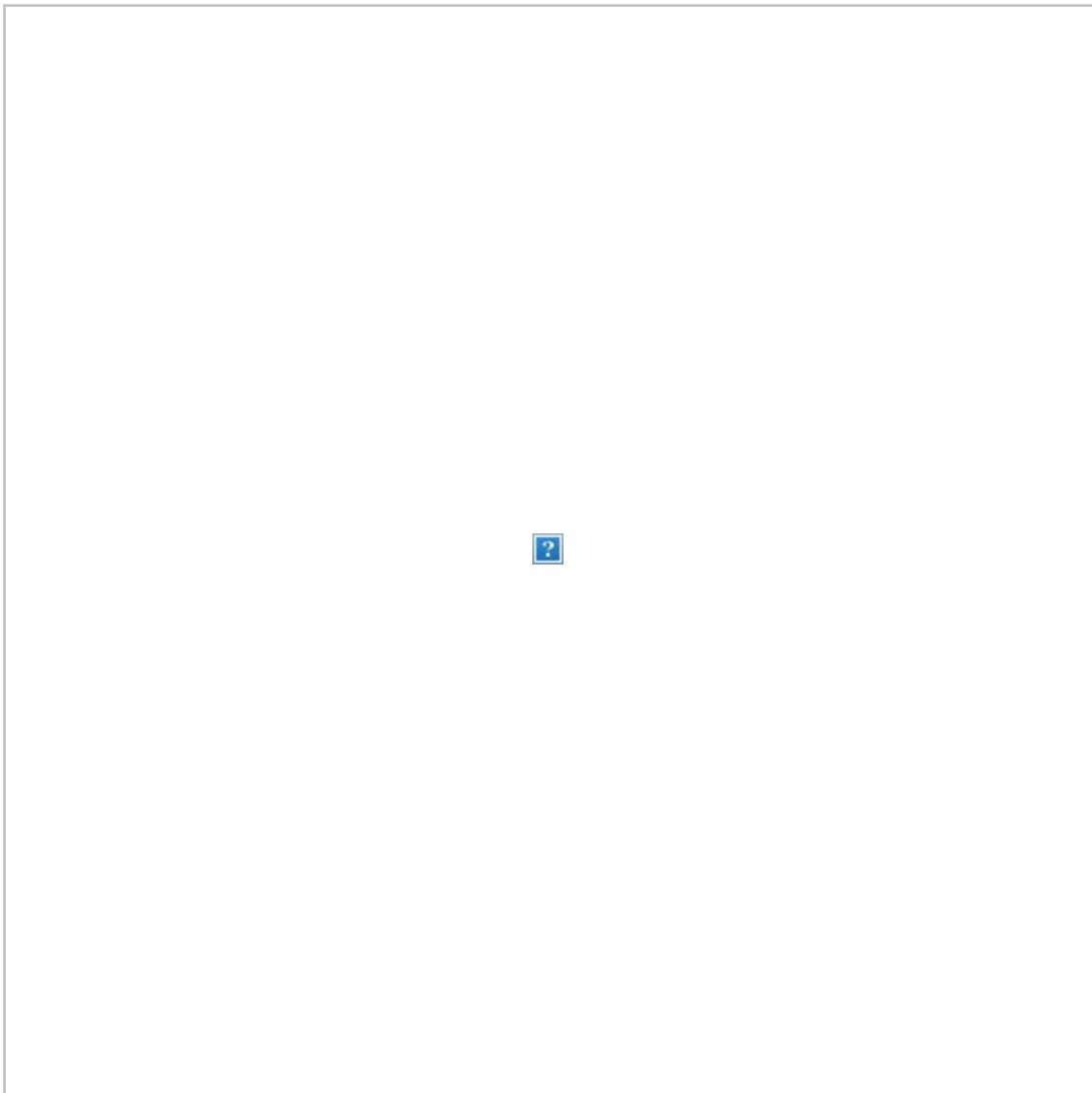
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) continues to gain more support for her "Green New Deal":



A House Democrat attacked Republican accusations of voter fraud as the investigation into North Carolina's disputed congressional race continues:



But a writer for The Fix noted this important distinction about the North Carolina race:



And this tweet from Barack Obama was the second-most liked tweet of 2018, according to Twitter's newly released data:





## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York Times, “ [‘Transactional’ Sex and a Secret Resignation Letter: Takeaways From a Report on Les Moonves](#),” by Rachel Abrams and David Enrich: “The outside lawyers were told by multiple people that CBS had an employee ‘who was ‘on call’ to perform oral sex’ on Mr. Moonves. According to the draft report: ‘A number of employees were aware of this and believed that the woman was protected from discipline or termination as a

result of it.' ... The report found that, in addition to consensual relationships and affairs, 'Moonves received oral sex from at least 4 CBS employees under circumstances that sound transactional and improper to the extent that there was no hint of any relationship, romance, or reciprocity.'"

-- The Atlantic, "[It's Almost Impossible to Be a Mom in Television News](#)," by Julianna Goldman: "According to a report by the Women's Media Center, television viewers are less likely to see women reporting the news today than just a few years ago. At the Big Three networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—combined, men were responsible for reporting 75 percent of the evening news broadcasts over three months in 2016, while women were responsible for reporting only 25 percent—a drop from 32 percent two years earlier. What could be contributing to this? Much has been written about anti-mom bias and the so-called motherhood penalty in industries from law to finance to tech. ... TV news is that and then some for working moms."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**" 'Damn Right, I'm a White Nationalist' Declares Texas GOP Platform Committee**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Sanders campaign drops \$300k on private jet travel," from [VT Digger](#):**

**Member,” from the Texas Observer:** “At the Texas Republican Party’s 2018 convention, Ray Myers was a part of a select group of activists charged with crafting the platform for the biggest and most influential state party in the country. Myers is also a white nationalist, a fact that he declared last week. ‘Damn Right, I’m a WHITE NATIONALIST and very Proud of it,’ Myers wrote in a Facebook post last Tuesday. Myers is a 74-year-old activist who has been involved in GOP politics for decades. But ‘the pivotal political moment came

“Sen. Bernie Sanders 2018 re-election campaign spent almost \$300,000 on private jet service for a recent cross country tour to stump for Democrats and test the presidential waters. According to federal campaign finance reports, Friends of Bernie Sanders, the senator’s official 2018 Senate campaign committee, spent \$297,685.50 with Apollo Jets, a private charter jet service headquartered in New York. The report does not break down the number of trips or where they were taken. ... Sanders came under criticism in 2017 after his

when Obama came on the scene. I knew immediately that America was in trouble,' he said in an Empower Texans profile.”

senate campaign spent a smaller amount with Apollo Jets — \$37,568. He was ridiculed for using a luxury service while criticizing the wealthy.”

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** and the first lady will attend the funeral of Bush 41 at the Washington National Cathedral today.

The president will also attend the Army-Navy Game on Saturday in Philadelphia, [Jake Russell reports](#).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“I have been at probably every powerful table that you can think of, I have worked at nonprofits, I have been at foundations, I have worked in corporations, served on corporate boards, I have been at G-summits, I have sat in at the U.N.: They are not that smart.” — Michelle Obama offering advice to young women on how to avoid self-doubt. ([Newsweek](#))



## **NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington could see flurries or even snow showers today.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “A bit of energy passing through the atmosphere could produce a few flurries or snow showers during the day. Can’t totally rule out a quick dusting if a heavier snow shower comes through. Otherwise we’re mostly cloudy and cold, with morning temperatures near 30 to the mid-30s, and afternoon highs stalling in the mid-30s to near 40.”

**-- The Capitals lost to the Golden Knights 5-3.**  
([Isabelle Khurshudyan](#))

**-- The Nationals have agreed to a deal with left-handed pitcher Patrick Corbin.** [From Chelsea Janes](#): “The terms of the deal are not yet known, though Yahoo and others have reported it is worth \$140 million and does include that ever-present Nationals' specialty — deferred money. The deal fills Washington’s most glaring hole, providing a proven arm behind Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg.”

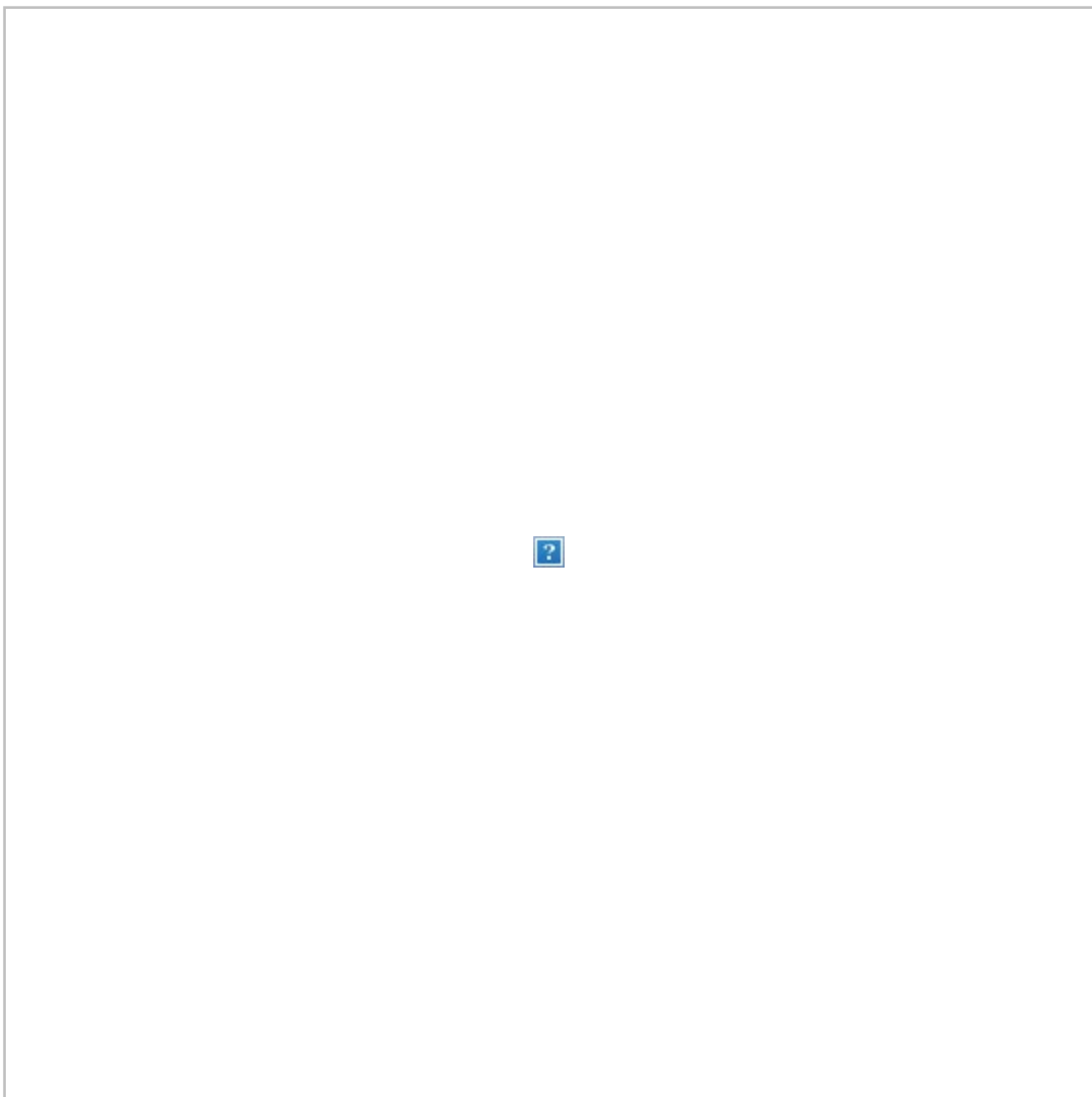
**-- The Office of Congressional Ethics found that outgoing Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-Va.) and his wife**

**had congressional staffers perform their personal errands.** [Jenna Portnoy reports](#): “The report found insufficient evidence for the claim that Garrett paid an employee out of his campaign coffers to do personal errands. ... On at least two occasions, Garrett or his wife asked a staff member to change the oil in the congressman’s car. A staffer went to Ikea and Costco with his wife, Flanna Garrett, during the workday. Staffers also frequently fed and walked the congressman’s dog, which was often present in the congressional office, and cared for the dog on their personal time.”

**-- The D.C. Council gave final approval to a bill decriminalizing Metro fare evasion.** [Faiz Siddiqui reports](#): “The measure passed amid staunch opposition from Metro and its board, which argued the transit agency loses more than \$25 million a year to fare evasion and that lessening the penalties for such an offense would only exacerbate the problem and lead to more crime. Council members and activists rejected that line of argument and said decriminalizing the act was an important step toward addressing disproportionate policing of African Americans on the transit system.”

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

This clip of Flynn chanting “lock her up” at the Republican National Convention really didn’t age well:



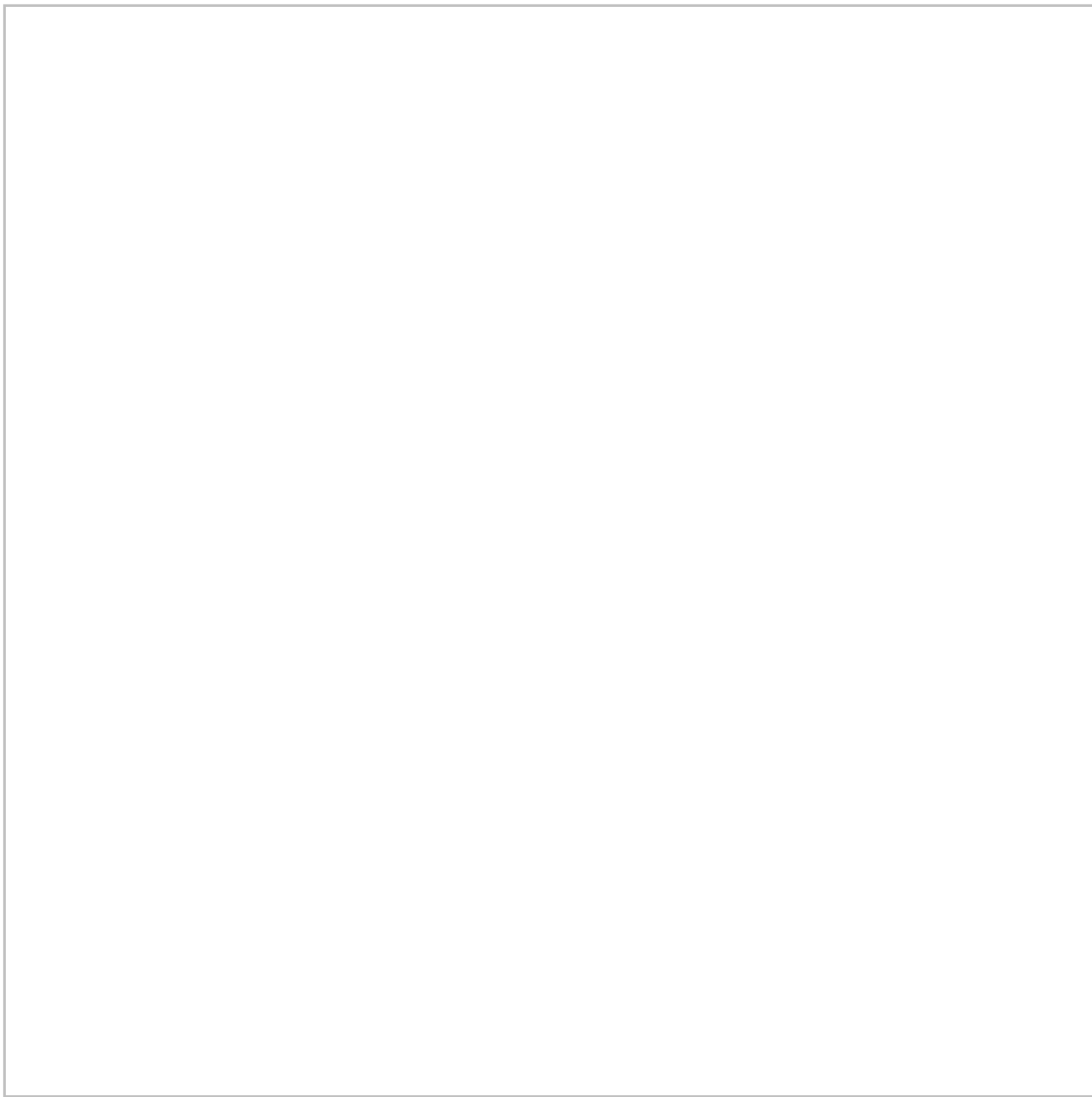
Michael Flynn leads chants of 'lock her up' at Republican Convention

Late-night hosts mocked Trump's self-description as  
"Tariff Man":



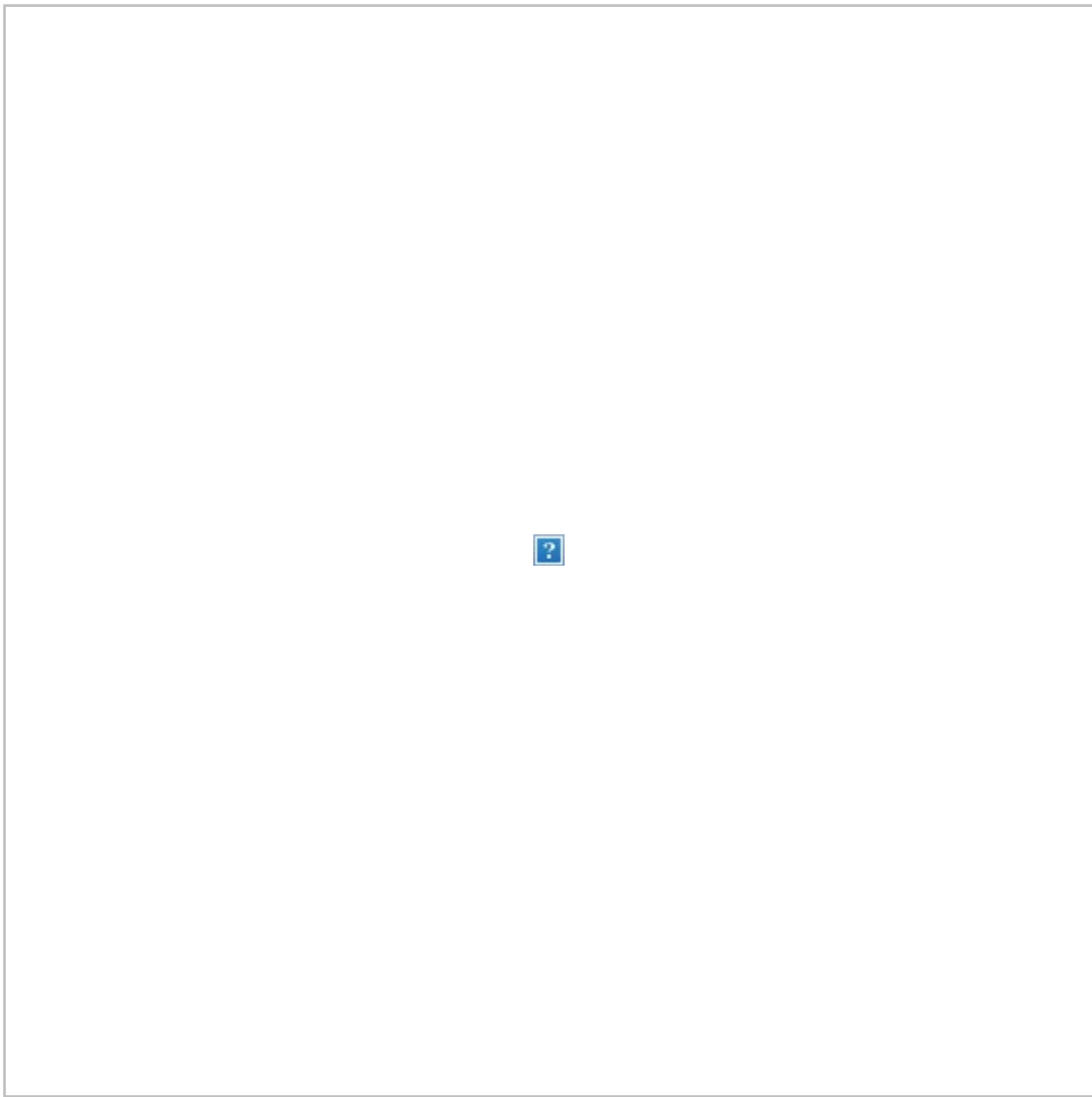
Tariff Man Is Going to be Angry About French Fries





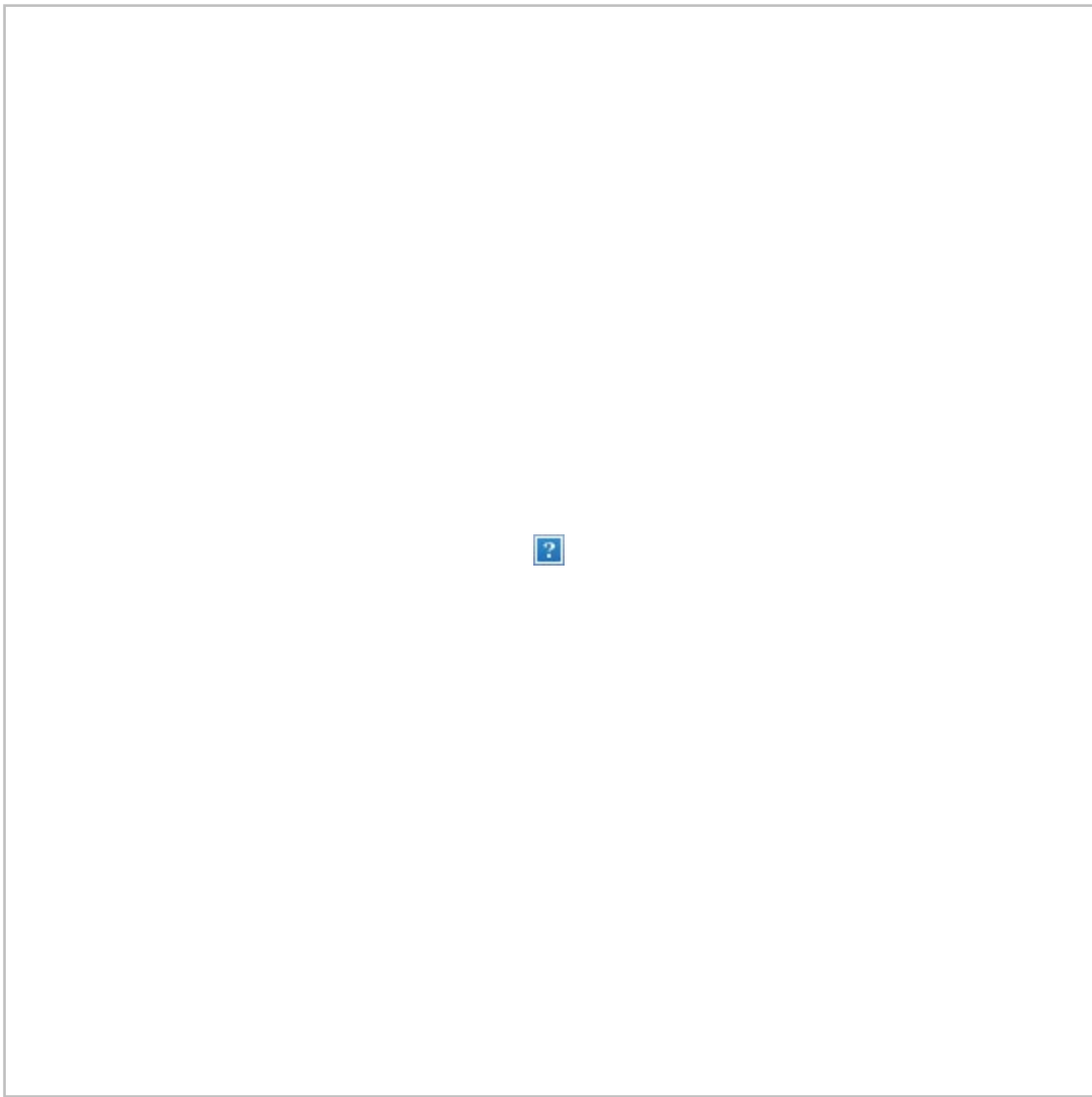
Tariff Man May Have Spoken Too Soon

**Bush's service dog, Sully, visited his casket at the Capitol:**



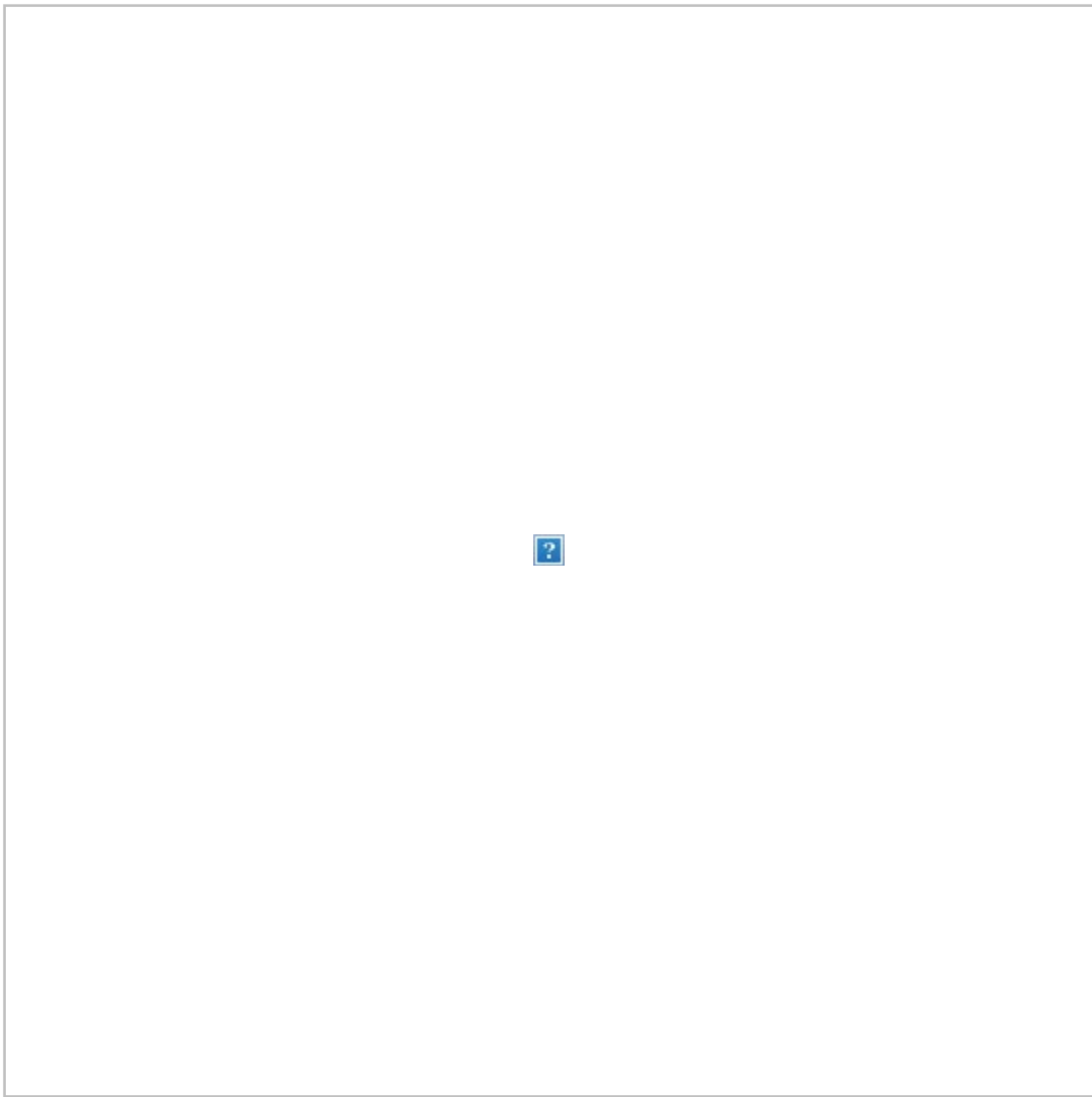
Bush's service dog Sully visits his coffin at the Capitol

The Post talked to the owner of Bush's favorite Houston restaurant to find out how he remembered the former president, a loyal customer for more than 35 years:



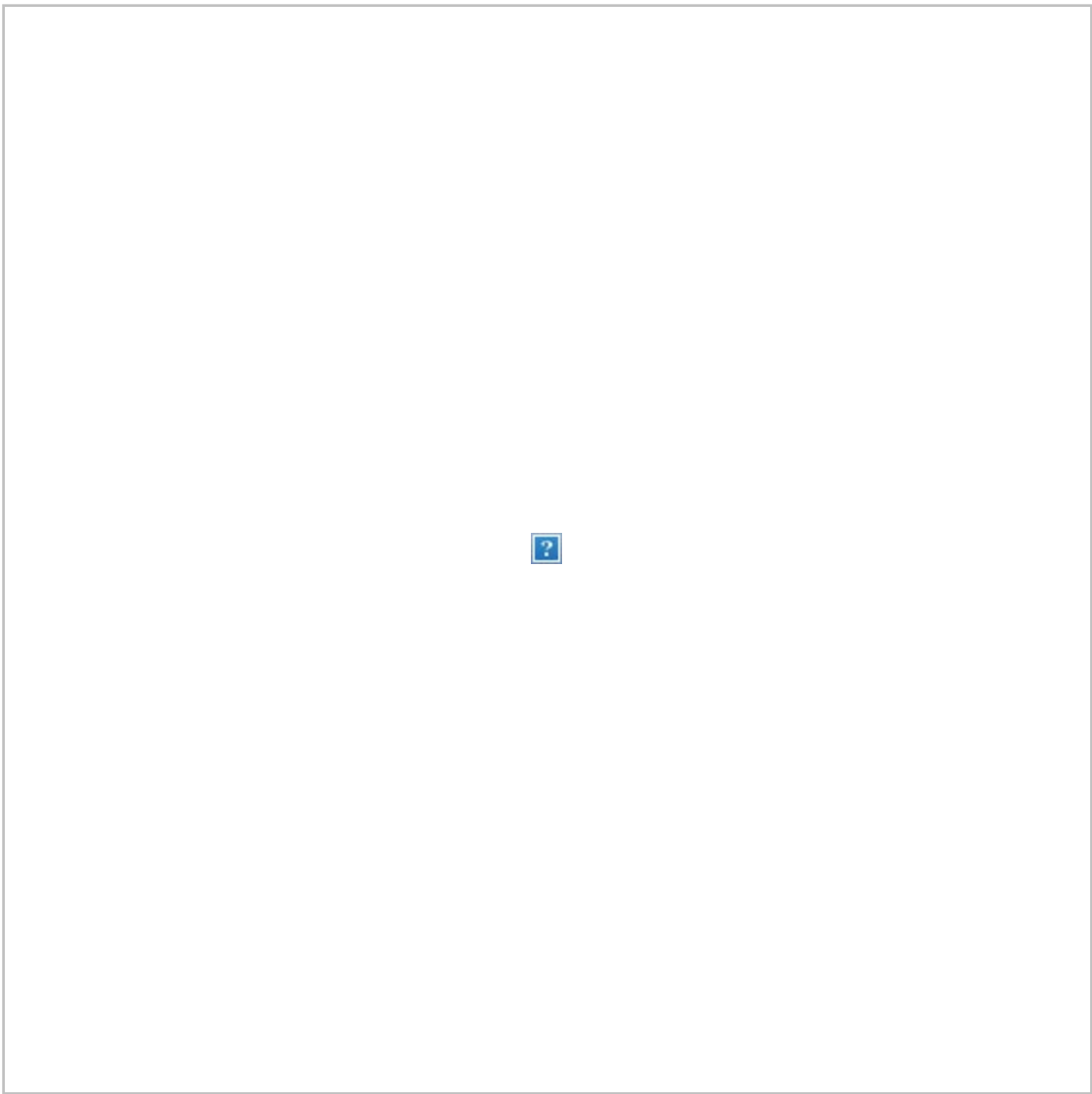
'Part of our family': How Bush's favorite Houston restaurant remembers him

The Fact Checker [outlined](#) how Trump has spun government data to present the best possible picture:



How President Trump twists government data to suit the political moment

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Polish President Andrzej Duda shook hands "Predator-style" on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference:



Schwarzenegger and Poland's Duda shake hands 'Predator-style'

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**From:** [The Washington Post](#)

**To:** [Stacie Davis](#)

**Subject:** The Daily 202: Flynn sentencing memo hints at how much Mueller knows that we still don't  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 05, 2018 8:59:04 AM

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# The Daily 202



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## Flynn sentencing memo hints at how

# much Mueller knows that we still don't



Mueller suggests no jail time for Michael Flynn, cites his 'substantial assistance'



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** The most striking part of Bob Mueller's sentencing memo recommending Michael Flynn serve no prison time, because of his "substantial" assistance to "several ongoing

**investigations,” is how much got blacked out. It’s a reminder of how many shoes might still drop.**

The special counsel revealed in [a 13-page court filing](#) late Tuesday night that President Trump’s former national security adviser has given 19 interviews to his office or other Justice Department attorneys, in addition to providing “documents and communications.”

**Tantalizingly, Mueller teases that “the defendant has provided substantial assistance in a criminal investigation.” Then there are 22 fully redacted lines of text.** That is in addition to the special counsel’s probe of “any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald J. Trump.”

Mueller has asked for several postponements in making a sentencing recommendation since Flynn pleaded guilty to a single felony count of making false statements to the FBI last December, a full year ago now. **Just how much he’s gotten out of the career intelligence officer has been a closely held secret. Now we know it’s a lot, but what exactly Mueller got remains a mystery.**

“While this [document] seeks to provide a comprehensive description of the benefit the government has thus far obtained from the defendant’s substantial assistance, some of that benefit may not be fully realized at this time because the investigations in which he has provided



assistance are ongoing,” said Mueller.

**The special counsel tells the judge that Flynn flipping when he did prompted others to cooperate and was “particularly valuable because he was one of the few people with long-term and firsthand insight regarding events and issues under investigation.”**

Flynn is one of five Trump aides who have pleaded guilty as a result of the special counsel’s investigation. Mueller, who fought in Vietnam as a Marine, noted that Flynn spent 33 years in the Army, including five years of combat duty, before retiring as a three-star lieutenant general.

**“The defendant’s record of military and public service distinguish him from every other person who has been charged,” the special counsel wrote.**

“However, senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards. The defendant’s extensive government service should have made him particularly aware of the harm caused by providing false information to the government, as well as the rules governing work performed on behalf of a foreign government.”

**-- Flynn's son celebrated the news that his dad probably won't go to prison:**



**-- Mueller will file two more documents on Friday:** He is scheduled to outline details of Michael Cohen's cooperation in a letter to the judge overseeing the former Trump consigliere's sentencing. He's also due to submit a filing explaining the ways that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort breached his plea agreement by being dishonest with prosecutors.



What happened between Flynn, Trump and Comey? The Fact Checker's Timeline

**-- Mueller biographer Garrett Graff [outlines 14 questions](#) this morning that the special counsel knows the answers to and that we don't:** “Decoding Mueller’s 17-month investigation has been a publicly frustrating exercise, as individual puzzle pieces, like Flynn's sentencing memo, often don’t hint at the final assembled picture—nor even tell us if we’re looking at a single interlocking puzzle, in which all the pieces are related, or multiple, separate, unrelated ones,” Graff

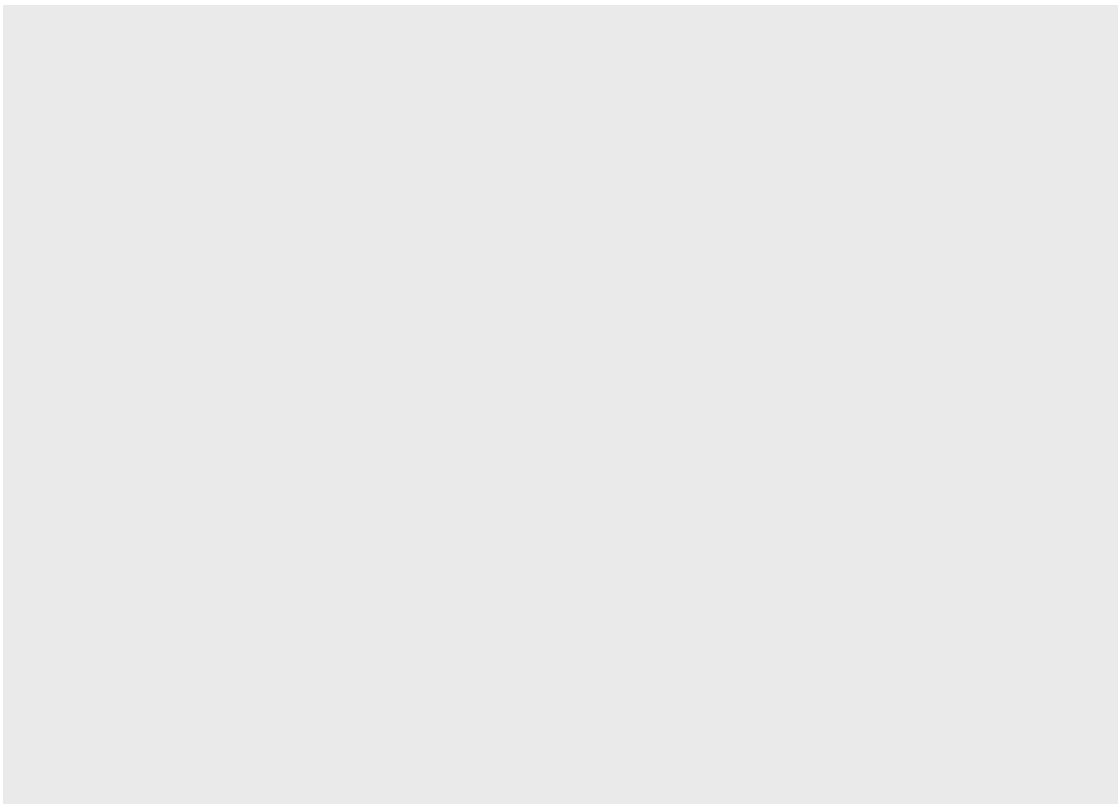
writes in a new piece [for Wired magazine](#). “Mueller’s careful, methodical strategy often only reveals itself in hindsight, as the significance of previous steps becomes clear with subsequent ones.”

1. Is Matt Whitaker overseeing the Russia probe—and is his appointment as attorney general even legal?
2. Is Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross involved in any of this?
3. How closely related is the investigation of the 2016 election to the Trump Organization’s financial scandals?
4. How did Trump himself, and the Trump family, react to Cohen’s updates on various schemes?
5. What has Felix Sater told Mueller?
6. What has George Nader told Mueller?
7. What happens to Cozy Bear?
8. Who is the (unindicted) Atlanta traveler?
9. Why was Trump’s team so concerned about the transition documents?
10. How much more of the Steele Dossier is true?
11. Is it a coincidence that the Internet Research Agency scheduled a “Down with Hillary” rally in New York, weeks in advance, for the day after WikiLeaks dumped the DNC emails?
12. Why isn’t Mueller prosecuting Maria Butina and Elena Alekseevna Khusyaynova?
13. Why is Mueller charging Michael Cohen?
14. Was the Guardian correct in reporting that Paul

Manafort met with Julian Assange?

**-- Rudy Giuliani said he's not concerned that Flynn has given Mueller anything that would implicate Trump:** "If he had information to share with Mueller that hurt the president, you would know it by now," the president's attorney [told NBC](#). "There's a Yiddish word that fits. They don't have bupkis."

**-- New Yorker writer Jeff Toobin thinks Trump ought to be nervous about Mueller's assertion that "senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards."** "I would be a little nervous if I were the people involved in the obstruction of justice investigation, starting, of course, with the president of the United States," he said [on CNN](#).





CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

# The power to strengthen communities

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Acting attorney general Matt Whitaker departs a Medal of Freedom ceremony at the White House. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS:**

**-- More than 400 former DOJ employees signed a statement opposing Whitaker's appointment as acting attorney general. [NBC News's Pete Williams reports](#):** "Because Whitaker hasn't been confirmed by the Senate, his qualifications have not been publicly reviewed and there's been no vetting for potential conflicts of

interest, they say. ... The former DOJ employees call on Trump to nominate someone to succeed Jeff Sessions, whom the president fired last month, and, in the meantime, to put a Senate-confirmed person in the acting attorney general position. Protect Democracy, which organized the effort, said that the signatories 'have served under administrations of both parties' and that the vast majority were non-partisan career civil servants."

**-- Whitaker has provided no clarity on how he is handling potential conflicts of interest.** [CNN's Laura Jarrett reports](#): "For now, officials in Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's office continue to handle management of [Mueller's investigation], but Whitaker's ability to pull rank as the acting attorney general and overrule Rosenstein's judgment may prove crucial in coming weeks as the investigation winds down — leading to mounting questions about what steps Whitaker has taken, or not taken, to heed any ethics advice after now serving 28 days as the nation's top law enforcement officer. Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee renewed their concerns Tuesday, writing in a letter to Justice officials that ... 'the Department has not produced prior versions of Mr. Whitaker's financial disclosures, any ethics agreements he entered into with the Department, or any other ethics-related counseling he has received.' "

**-- Trump ally Roger Stone invoked the Fifth Amendment to avoid sharing documents and**



**testimony with the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

[Politico's Kyle Cheney reports](#): “ ‘Mr. Stone's invocation of his Fifth Amendment privilege must be understood by all to be the assertion of a Constitutional right by an innocent citizen who denounces secrecy,’ Stone's attorney, Grant Smith, said. ... In [his letter], Stone's attorney said his client simply wants his information aired in public, and not subject to selective leaks that marked his closed-door testimony to the House Intelligence Committee last year.”

**-- Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump's tweets praising Stone for not testifying against him and berating Michael Cohen add to “a growing body of evidence that the President is attempting to obstruct justice.”**

“We must ensure that the Mueller investigation proceeds without political interference, and that any and all acts of obstruction are exposed, either by Mueller in his report or by the Congress,” Schiff said in a statement. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))

**-- Former Trump campaign aide Sam Nunberg will meet next month with the Senate Intelligence Committee.** [Robert Costa reports](#): “Nunberg confirmed his pending meeting in an interview Tuesday with The Post, saying, ‘I’m happy to cooperate and appear’ for what is likely to be a closed session with committee staffers. ... Nunberg’s visit is the latest sign that the Senate Intelligence Committee’s investigation is going to

carry into the new year.”

**-- New White House counsel Pat Cipollone will start in the role on Monday after a nearly two-month delay.**

[From Politico's Eliana Johnson](#): “Even before assuming his official duties, Cipollone has reached out to several lawyers to staff an office responsible for everything from judicial nominations to federal litigation to presidential pardons. ... The new hires will begin a badly needed rebuilding of the counsel’s office. ... **A longer-than-expected security clearance process, however, prevented Cipollone from assuming the job**, even as the Mueller probe advances and a House Democratic majority draws ever nearer to assuming power. That has left Cipollone playing catchup as he tries to fill vacant posts in an office whose staff numbers in the dozens.”

**-- Another high-ranking FBI official who played key roles in the investigations into Hillary Clinton’s email server and the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russia is leaving the bureau.** [The Wall Street Journal's Byron Tau reports](#): “Bill Priestap, who currently serves as assistant director of the [FBI’s] counterintelligence division, will leave his post by the end of the year. ... Mr. Priestap’s retirement is unrelated to the controversies over the handling of the 2016 investigations, according to a person familiar with the matter. ... **After Mr. Priestap’s departure, none of the high-ranking bureau officials involved in the two**

investigations will remain with the bureau.”



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



Republican secretary of state candidate Brad Raffensperger greets supporters in Augusta, Ga. (Michael Holahan/Augusta Chronicle/AP)

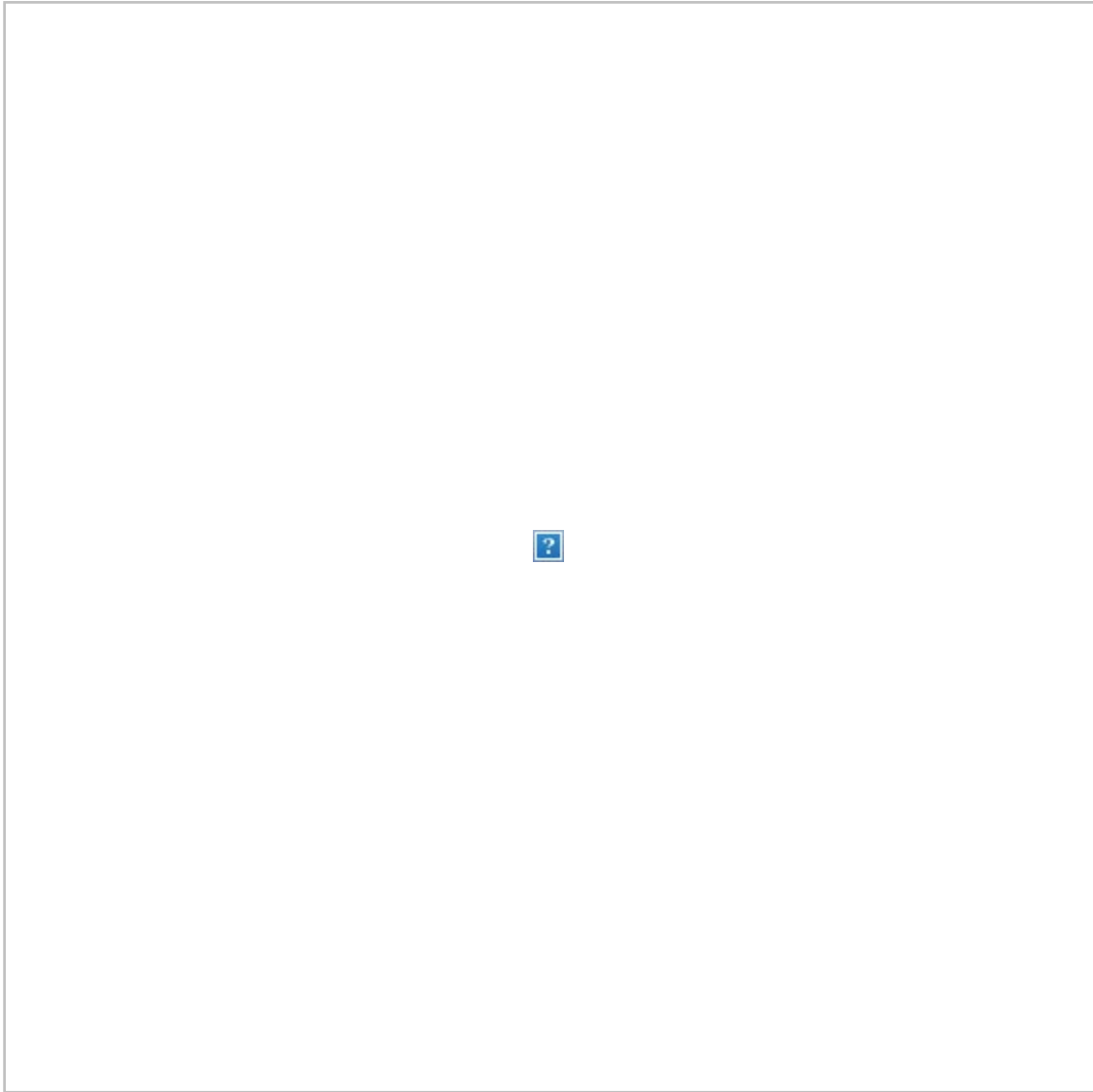
**-- Republican Brad Raffensperger won the runoff race to become Georgia's secretary of state, defeating former Democratic congressman John Barrow. [Matt Viser reports](#):** "Raffensperger's election continues a losing streak for Georgia Democrats, who have not won a statewide election since 2010, and ensures that stricter election laws pushed by state Republicans remain in

place barring successful legal challenges. ... The two candidates were separated by less than 20,000 votes in the first election, with Raffensperger running slightly ahead. Democrats were unable to harness the energy that they had during the November election, however, and Raffensperger led by more than four points Tuesday with 98 percent of precincts reporting. **Turnout appeared to be only about a third of the November number.**"

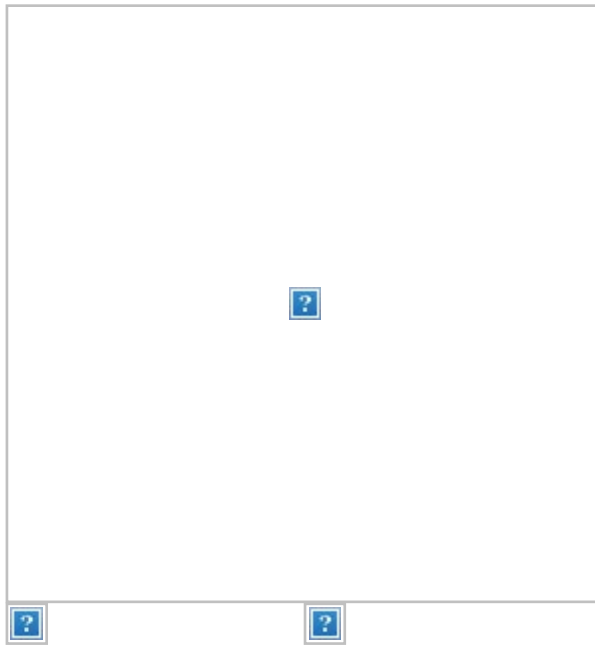
**-- In another runoff, Little Rock elected an African American mayor, Frank Scott Jr., a 35-year-old banker who was formerly state highway commissioner.** The Arkansas capital has had two previous black mayors, but they were appointed by fellow members of the city council. ([KARK](#))

**-- The fate of the Weekly Standard — which has continued to critique Trump from the right long after most other conservative publications — is uncertain.** [CNN's Oliver Darcy reports](#): "The magazine's precarious position comes after its leadership spent months searching for a buyer ... However, [publisher] MediaDC recently informed The Weekly Standard's leadership that the company was no longer interested in a sale ... Instead, Ryan McKibben, the chairman of MediaDC, asked to meet with [Editor in Chief Stephen Hayes] in a meeting tentatively scheduled for late next week ... [He] also requested the entire staff of The Weekly Standard be made available following the meeting. That request,

coupled with MediaDC's Monday announcement that its other conservative news organization, The Washington Examiner, would be expanding its magazine into a weekly publication, has left The Weekly Standard's leadership worrying."



Trump International Hotel is seen in Washington. (Alex Brandon/AP)



## GET SMART FAST:

1. **The attorneys general of Maryland and D.C. have issued subpoenas to as many as 13 of Trump's private entities in their emoluments lawsuit involving Trump International Hotel.** The subpoenas seek information on which foreign governments have paid the Trump Organization, data the attorneys general hope will bolster their argument that the president is violating the Constitution by improperly benefiting from his office. ([Jonathan O'Connell, Ann E. Marimow and David A. Fahrenthold](#))
2. **France's nationwide protests are the latest backlash against taxes meant to fight climate change.** French President Emmanuel Macron's

decision to temporarily suspend a set of carbon taxes is another example of how politically unpopular such environmental policies can be. ([Steven Mufson and James McAuley](#))

3. **Many climate scientists and policy experts have become pessimistic about countries adopting proposals robust enough to slow the advancement of climate change.** At the U.N. climate conference in Poland, several major countries are expected to announce they have failed to meet the targets they set in Paris three years ago. ([Steven Mufson](#))
4. **The Justice Department charged four people with tax evasion in connection with the 2016 Panama Papers.** The indictment, centered on accusations that the people spent decades hiding tens of millions of dollars from the IRS, marks the first time U.S. officials have issued charges related to the Panama Papers. ([Devlin Barrett](#))
5. **A new report alleges Leslie Moonves misled investigators and destroyed evidence during a probe into the sexual misconduct allegations against the former CBS CEO.** Lawyers who conducted the inquiry said CBS had justification to deny Moonves his \$120 million severance after he “engaged in multiple acts of serious nonconsensual



sexual misconduct in and outside of the workplace, both before and after he came to CBS in 1995.” ([New York Times](#))

6. **Nikki Haley plans to stay in New York and work on a second book after stepping down as U.N. ambassador.** The former South Carolina governor said she would return to the state, where she recently sold her home, after her son finishes high school. ([Charleston Post and Courier](#))
7. **A West Palm Beach, Fla., trial that was expected to include testimony from women who have accused billionaire Jeffrey Epstein of sexual abuse was settled moments before it was supposed to begin.** Epstein apologized for making “false and hurtful allegations” against Bradley Edwards, the attorney for some of Epstein’s accusers. Epstein had claimed Edwards ginned up the sexual molestation accusations as part of a fundraising scheme. ([Lori Rozsa](#))
8. **Interest in becoming a police officer is on the decline across the United States.** In Seattle, where the starting salary is \$79,000, applications have dropped by nearly 50 percent. And departments are struggling to retain new officers, some of whom leave after less than a year. ([Tom Jackman](#))



Bob Dole stands to pay respect to George H.W. Bush

## **BUSH 41 REMEMBERED:**

**-- Mourners gathered at the Capitol to honor George H.W Bush before his funeral today at Washington National Cathedral. [Marc Fisher, Marissa J. Lang and Elise Viebeck report](#):** “They came to attention as World War II veterans, including former senator Bob Dole, who rose from his wheelchair, jaw quivering, to deliver a quick, crisp salute. Mostly, they offered a final

farewell to George Herbert Walker Bush as fellow Americans, eager to honor decency, moderation and a commitment to making things work, all of which he embodied. The Capitol Rotunda was open to all Tuesday, and they came in a manner befitting the 41st president — not in huge numbers, but steadily; with grace and seriousness of purpose; with nothing disparaging to say, but with a recaptured sense that, even now, we're all in this together.”

**-- Bush's funeral has created an informal reunion for former members of his administration who have gathered to celebrate his life.** [The New York Times's Peter Baker reports](#): “More than a quarter-century after the original Bush administration left Washington and nearly a decade after the departure of the second, the men and women who once ran the nation and, by extension, the world were back. On the eve of the state funeral for President George Bush, they caught up, shared stories and honored those no longer around. ‘Everybody’s a mixture of sad and joyful because we’re celebrating a great life,’ said Jonathan Bush, the younger brother of the 41st president and uncle of the 43rd.”

**-- The United States will recognize a national day of mourning today for Bush.** [From Kimberly Winston](#): “Flags will be at half-staff; federal offices and the stock market will be closed. Millions of people, here and abroad, are expected to watch a live broadcast of Bush’s

state funeral from Washington National Cathedral.”

**-- Bush’s death has sparked debates about his legacy on race issues.** [From Sean Sullivan](#): “During his first campaign for the Senate in Texas, [Bush] opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark law banning many forms of racial discrimination. But four years later, as a member of the House, he voted for watershed legislation making it illegal to refuse to sell or rent housing on the basis of race. When he ran for president two decades after that, Bush and his allies made an African American man convicted of murder and rape a central focus of his campaign’s effort to portray his opponent as weak on crime — stoking a controversy that [reemerged](#) in the racially charged atmosphere of this year’s midterm elections.”

**-- Trump’s use of a motorcade to visit George W. Bush at Blair House, which is 250 yards from the White House, triggered some light criticism.** [David Nakamura reports](#): “The Trumps spent 23 minutes visiting with Bush and his wife, Laura, by all accounts a cordial meeting in which the former president exchanged kisses on the cheek with the current first lady at the curb. ... The need for the motorcade, however, prompted questions, and a healthy dose of speculation, about why the Trumps were unable — or unwilling — to simply walk across the street. ‘Presidents, including the last one, have made the walk before,’ observed Edward Price, who served as

National Security Council spokesman in the Obama administration. ... [But in] her autobiography 'Becoming,' former first lady Michelle Obama wrote that the Secret Service sometimes requested she or her husband 'take the motorcade instead of walking in the fresh air' to Blair House for security reasons."



Graham: Saudi crown prince 'complicit' in Khashoggi murder

## **KHASHOGGI FALLOUT:**

**-- Contradicting assertions from Trump and members**

**of his Cabinet, Republican senators said a briefing from CIA Director Gina Haspel on the killing of Post contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi has convinced them of the Saudi crown prince's involvement.** [Shane Harris and Karoun Demirjian report:](#)

“ ‘There’s not a smoking gun — there’s a smoking saw,’ said Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), referring to the bone saw that investigators believe was used to dismember Khashoggi ... Armed with classified details provided by [Haspel], senators shredded the arguments put forward by senior administration officials who had earlier insisted that the evidence of [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's] alleged role was inconclusive. The gulf that has emerged between Republican lawmakers and the president over how to respond to the journalist’s killing appeared to widen after Tuesday’s briefing, with Graham, one of Trump’s closest Senate allies, announcing that he was no longer willing to work with the crown prince, whom the White House regards as one of its most important allies in the Middle East.

“In recent days, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have said that no single piece of evidence irrefutably links Mohammed to the killing. But the senators, in effect, said that did not matter, because the evidence they heard convinced them beyond the shadow of a doubt. **‘If the crown prince went in front of a jury, he would be convicted in 30 minutes,’ said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the chairman of the**

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee.** ... Graham leveled sharp criticism at Pompeo and Mattis, saying he thought they were 'following the lead of the president.' He called them 'good soldiers.' "

**-- The GOP senators essentially accused Trump of helping Saudi Arabia try to cover up the killing.** [From Aaron Blake](#): "Graham said Tuesday that you'd have to be 'willfully blind' to not know Mohammed was 'intricately involved' — a clear rebuke of Trump's argument that this whole thing resides in some kind of gray area. ... **'If they were in a Democratic administration,' Graham said of Pompeo and Mattis, 'I would be all over them for being in the pocket of Saudi Arabia.'** ... Corker also suggested that the briefing last week, which featured Pompeo and Mattis but not Haspel, was entirely misleading. When asked whether there was a difference in the message about Mohammed's culpability, Corker compared it to the 'difference between darkness and sunshine.' "

**-- Not all Republicans: A GOP congressman justified Trump's response to Khashoggi's killing by saying, "Journalists disappear all over the country."** [Felicia Sonmez reports](#): "[Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah)] echoed Trump, telling CNN's Brianna Keilar that 'no one can say' for certain what happened and maintaining that it is in U.S. interests not to allow the relationship with Saudi Arabia to rupture. 'We have to have a relationship with

some players that we don't agree with,' Stewart said. 'Journalists disappear all over the country. Twenty journalists have been killed in Mexico. You don't think it's happened in Turkey and China? Of course it does. And yet, we have to have a relationship with these individuals, or with these countries.' ”



'Tough' day for Wall Street as Dow plunges 799 points

## **THE TRADE WAR:**

**-- U.S. stock markets fell 3 percent as skepticism**



**grew of Trump's claims the United States and China reached a trade breakthrough during the G-20 summit.** "The reversals more than erased the tepid gains Monday in reaction to Trump's initial account of what he said were promises made by the Chinese government," [Damian Paletta, David J. Lynch and Josh Dawsey report.](#)

"Three days after Trump emerged from his dinner with [Chinese President Xi Jinping] touting an 'incredible' deal, U.S. and Chinese officials were offering different accounts of whether there was a 90-day deadline for progress in new trade talks, the schedule for China to increase its purchases of American farm and industrial products, and Beijing's plans to reduce or eliminate specific tariffs. **While Trump tweeted a day after the meeting that China would 'reduce and remove' tariffs on U.S. automobiles, his aides acknowledged privately Tuesday that China had made no such commitment. 'Nobody knows what the deal is,' said one top White House adviser** ... Late Tuesday in Washington, after doubts about the deal blew into the open and the market plunged, the Trump administration was able to take some solace from a Chinese Ministry of Commerce statement that acknowledged hopes of meeting a 90-day timetable. ...

**"In a series of Twitter posts Tuesday, the president threatened to slap additional import penalties on Chinese products if China did not make major changes in its economic relationship with the United**

**States.** ‘President Xi and I want this deal to happen, and it probably will,’ Trump wrote. ‘But if not remember, I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power.’ Tuesday night, the president bore down on the theme, tweeting: ‘We are either going to have a REAL DEAL with China, or no deal at all — at which point we will be charging major Tariffs against Chinese product being shipped into the United States.’ ”

**-- “Once again this week, world leaders, U.S. lawmakers and jittery investors have been reminded that Trump’s words cannot always be trusted,”**

[Damian Paletta and Philip Rucker write](#). “Global markets demand consistency and reliability, but Trump delivers neither. Instead, he makes knee-jerk announcements that surprise investors, lawmakers and even some of his own aides and advisers, who sometimes find themselves reversing course depending on the president’s whims.”

**-- China is secretly funding the creation of a new Boeing satellite that incorporates technology used by the U.S. military.** [The Wall Street Journal’s Brian](#)

[Spegele and Kate O’Keeffe report](#): “About \$200 million flowed to the satellite project from a state-owned Chinese financial firm in a complex deal that used offshore companies to channel China’s money to Boeing. ... Such technology would help fill in a missing piece of the puzzle

for China as it seeks to secure its status as a superpower alongside the U.S. It would bolster China's burgeoning space program, as well as initiatives to dominate cutting-edge industries and expand its influence in the developing world. A web of U.S. laws effectively prohibits exporting satellite technology to China, and its satellites lag far behind those made in America."



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, with the help of the Mary and Don Miller family from Plainfield, Wis., flipped the switch to light the Christmas tree in the State Capitol rotunda last night in Madison. (Steve Apps/Wisconsin State Journal/AP)

## **MORE MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- The National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's campaign arm, was the victim of a cyberattack during the 2018 election cycle. [Ellen Nakashima and Shane Harris report](#):** “It wasn’t known whether a foreign government was behind the intrusion into the computer networks of the [NRCC], a person familiar with the case said. But the intruder was ‘sophisticated, based on their tactics and methods,’ and the intrusion ‘was clearly designed to hide the tracks of who it was,’ this person said ... The committee discovered the breach in April, said a person familiar with the case. Officials conducted an internal investigation, contacted the bureau within days and ‘gave the FBI everything they asked for,’ the person said. ... **The NRCC intrusion bears similarities to the DNC breach in 2016.**”

**-- Wisconsin Republicans are moving forward with attempts to [limit](#) the power of incoming Democrats, despite public criticism and protests. [Dan Simmons and Felicia Sonmez report](#):** “By Tuesday evening, the Wisconsin Senate had passed the least controversial of the three lame-duck bills, a measure on taxes and transportation that was approved by the GOP-controlled chamber on a party-line vote. ... Among the more hotly debated parts of the plan are provisions that would limit

early voting, which has helped Democrats, and restrict the ability of Gov.-elect Tony Evers (D) to make appointments. ... Opponents of the plan, meanwhile, continued to demonstrate at the State Capitol, including at a Christmas-tree lighting presided over by Gov. Scott Walker (R).” **Just after midnight, Republicans [approved](#) a plan to lock in place a Medicaid work requirement, which Evers said he intended to roll back.**

**-- Incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) suggested Democrats may refuse to seat a North Carolina Republican whose election is being investigated for possible fraud. [Mike DeBonis reports](#):** “[Hoyer] made the comments to reporters Tuesday as North Carolina election officials investigate whether an operative working on behalf of Republican candidate Mark Harris illegally collected incomplete ballots from voters. Hoyer’s comments, and the increasing criticism from other national Democrats, represent a new threat to Harris’s candidacy — suggesting that even if his apparent narrow victory is ultimately certified by the state, Harris could be subject to a months-long process in the House to determine whether he is ultimately sworn in.”

**-- A Trump-appointed federal prosecutor who has repeatedly prosecuted noncitizens for voting now has jurisdiction over the North Carolina case. [HuffPost’s Sam Levine and Ryan J. Reilly report](#):** “[U.S.

Attorney Robert] Higdon's office also issued a broad subpoena request earlier this year for millions of voter registration applications and absentee ballots, which the North Carolina Board of Elections voted to quash. Under scrutiny, Higdon's office delayed the subpoenas until after November's election. Election officials are now investigating apparent irregularities with absentee ballots in the midterm race."

**-- Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) is launching a new political action committee to recruit Republican women to run for Congress. [John Wagner reports](#):**

"Stefanik, who served for two years as the first female head of recruitment at the National Republican Congressional Committee, announced the formation of her PAC, which she said will field female candidates in GOP primaries. That is at odds with the practices of the NRCC, which does not get involved in contests among Republicans. Rep. Tom Emmer (Minn.), the newly elected NRCC chairman, made that point in a story in Roll Call, telling the publication 'if that's what Elise wants to do, then that's her call, her right.' 'But,' he added, 'I think that's a mistake.' Stefanik fired back Tuesday on Twitter, sharing the Roll Call story and highlighting Emmer's quote. 'NEWSFLASH,' she wrote. 'I wasn't asking for permission.' " ([Read more](#) from Power Up's Jackie Alemany this morning.)



Watch Beto O'Rourke's full concession speech

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Scoop: Obama met with Beto O'Rourke as the former Democratic Senate candidate weighs a presidential bid.** [Matt Viser reports](#): "The meeting, which was held Nov. 16 at the former president's offices in Foggy Bottom, came as former Obama aides have encouraged the Democratic House member to run, seeing him as capable of the same kind of inspirational

campaign that caught fire in the 2008 presidential election. The meeting was the first sign of Obama getting personally involved in conversations with O'Rourke ... TMZ, the Hollywood-based entertainment website, is now trailing O'Rourke; he is being swamped by calls from Democratic operatives eager to work for him, and other campaigns-in-the-making are eyeing his moves closely for any signs of his intentions. ...

**“O'Rourke was not among the slate of candidates that Obama endorsed during the midterm elections, but that came in part at O'Rourke's request.** Obama offered several times to help O'Rourke's campaign, including to come to Texas for a rally or to record robo-calls offering his endorsement. ... Obama even recorded a video that O'Rourke's campaign never utilized; it remained a subject of internal debate. O'Rourke ... hasn't forgotten his 2012 congressional campaign, when Obama — as well as another former president, Bill Clinton — endorsed his opponent, eight-term Democratic congressman Silvestre Reyes.”

**“Some of his closest friends ... expect (Beto) to run, with one of them putting 60-40 odds on his getting into the race.** O'Rourke has enlisted his longtime aide, David Wyson, to handle the barrage of incoming calls. But he has not made any commitments and has largely ignored requests coming from groups in the early-voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire eager to have him



visit.”

**-- Former Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick is expected to announce he will not pursue a 2020 run. [Politico's Natasha Korecki, Kyle Cheney and Stephanie Murray report](#):** “Patrick informed staff and advisers of his decision (yesterday), the sources say, with an announcement to come as soon as this week. A close ally of [Obama], the Democrat rejoined the private sector at Bain Capital after serving two terms as Massachusetts's governor. But he ramped up his political activity this fall in advance of a possible presidential bid, traveling to a handful of races across the country.”

**-- Stormy Daniels's attorney Michael Avenatti took himself out of the running for 2020. [John Wagner reports](#):** “ ‘I do not make this decision lightly — I make it out of respect for my family. But for their concerns, I would run,’ Avenatti said in a statement in which he did not detail the concerns. Avenatti said he would continue to represent Daniels ‘and others against Donald Trump and his cronies and will not rest until Trump is removed from office, and our republic and its values are restored.’ ”

**-- The DNC is finalizing a 2020 primary debate schedule that will allow lesser-known candidates to share a stage with front-runners. [Michael Scherer reports](#):** “Chairman Tom Perez and his team have been meeting for months with 2016 campaign advisers and

other stakeholders to find a way to improve the debate process, while accommodating the unusually large class of credible potential candidates, which could number more than 20 by spring. Perez has made clear to his staff that he would like the field to be presented in a way that initially mixes top-tier candidates with lesser-known ones.”

**-- Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, another potential 2020 candidate who just finished his term as chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, is trying to block Joe Manchin from becoming the top Democrat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee over the West Virginia senator's views on climate change.** [The Guardian's Ben Jacobs reports](#): “In an email sent out to supporters, Inslee insists: ‘Senate Democrats must not allow Joe Manchin to become the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I need your help to stop this.’ While the Washington Democrat offers some praise for Manchin ... he adds: ‘But on climate, he’s simply wrong.’ ...The effort shows Inslee making an effort to appeal to [progressives] as a potential ‘climate candidate’ if he chooses to run in 2020.”



Reporters swarm Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney at the White House. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

## **THE DOMESTIC AGENDA:**

**-- Mick Mulvaney has overseen a drastic curtailment of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's mission and oversight. [Robert O'Harrow Jr., Shawn Boburg and Renae Merle have an in-depth look at Mulvaney's tenure](#):** "One year after Mulvaney's arrival, he and his political aides have constrained the agency from

within, achieving what conservatives on Capitol Hill had for years been unable to do, according to agency data and interviews with career officials. Publicly announced enforcement actions by the bureau have dropped about 75 percent from average in recent years, while consumer complaints have risen to new highs, according to a Washington Post analysis of bureau data. Over the past year, the agency's workforce has dropped by at least 129 employees amid the largest exodus since its creation in 2010, agency data shows.

“Created by Congress to protect Americans from financial abuses, the bureau under Mulvaney has adopted the role of promoting ‘free markets’ and guarding the rights of banks and financial firms as well as those of consumers, according to statements by Mulvaney and bureau documents. ... The Senate this week is expected to confirm a new agency director, Kathy Kraninger, an associate director at the Office of Management and Budget, where Mulvaney splits his time as director. But Democrats have pledged to examine Mulvaney's tenure at the consumer protection bureau after they take control of the House in January.”

**-- The future of a multimillion-dollar contract to research new HIV treatments has been thrown into question over the Trump administration's opposition to the lab's use of fetal tissue. [Amy Goldstein reports](#):**  
“The turmoil over the National Institutes of Health contract

with the University of California at San Francisco is part of a building battle between conservatives opposed to research using fetal tissue and scientists who say the material is vital to developing new therapies for diseases from AIDS to Parkinson's. ... Last week, an NIH contracting official told the principal investigator at UCSF that the government was ending the seven-year contract midstream and that the decision was coming from the 'highest levels,' according to a virologist familiar with the events. Five days later, the university received a letter from the AIDS division of NIH's National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases saying the government would continue the contract for 90 days rather than the expected year-long renewal, with no forecast of its prospects after that."

**-- A government task force recommended ways to make the Postal Service more profitable, including reconsidering how e-commerce packages are priced.**

[Rachel Siegel reports](#): "But it did not go so far as to say the financially strapped Postal Service is losing money to Amazon, a company which contracts services from the Postal Service and that has consistently drawn Trump's ire. Even though the 70-page report does not specifically cite its contract with Amazon, it does recommend a reevaluation of the pricing for e-commerce packages and other non-essential mail shipped by companies such as Amazon." (Amazon.com chief executive Jeff Bezos also owns The Post.)

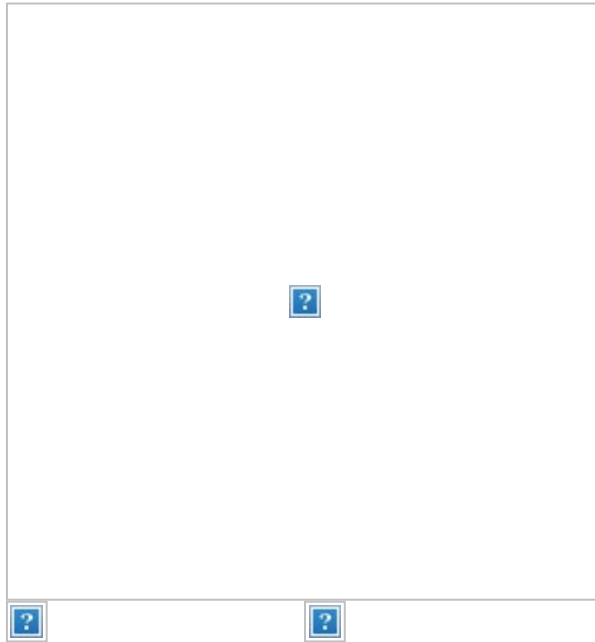
**-- Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) voiced confidence the chamber's criminal justice bill would pass "overwhelmingly" if Mitch McConnell allowed a vote on it.** [John Wagner reports](#): "Grassley said that he has met a target for support set by McConnell and that senators should take up the legislation by the end of the year, arguing that Republicans could even delay the confirmation of some judicial nominees to create more time. ... Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) ... said support among the 49-member Democratic caucus is 'solid,' though he stopped short of guaranteeing that every Democrat would vote for the bill. Grassley argued that waiting until next year would hurt the chances of passing the bill."

**-- A native-born U.S. citizen was held for weeks for potential deportation to Jamaica.** [Isaac Stanley-Becker reports](#): "[Peter Sean Brown] had been accused of a probation violation after testing positive for marijuana. But instead of returning home with a court date, or passing a few days in custody, Brown would spend weeks behind bars, battling his way through a labyrinthine immigration nightmare made all the more baffling by his citizenship."

**-- Google CEO Sundar Pichai's congressional testimony has been rescheduled for Dec. 11 because of George H.W. Bush's funeral.** The House Judiciary Committee is expected to question Pichai on

Republican allegations the search engine is unfairly biased against conservatives. ([Tony Romm](#))

## **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**



Trump touted his gentleman's agreement with Xi on Twitter this morning after the markets tanked yesterday:



The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee continued to criticize Trump for his tweets about Michael Cohen and Roger Stone:





Trump offered a message of "I told you so" to a European ally:



Meanwhile, BuzzFeed News’s deputy director of breaking news mocked Trump's description of himself as a “Tariff Man”:



The president and the first lady met a pair of their predecessors at the Blair House:



One of Bush 41's sons thanked Bob Dole after he stood from his wheelchair to salute the casket of his former political rival:



From a New York Times reporter:



From an NBC News host:

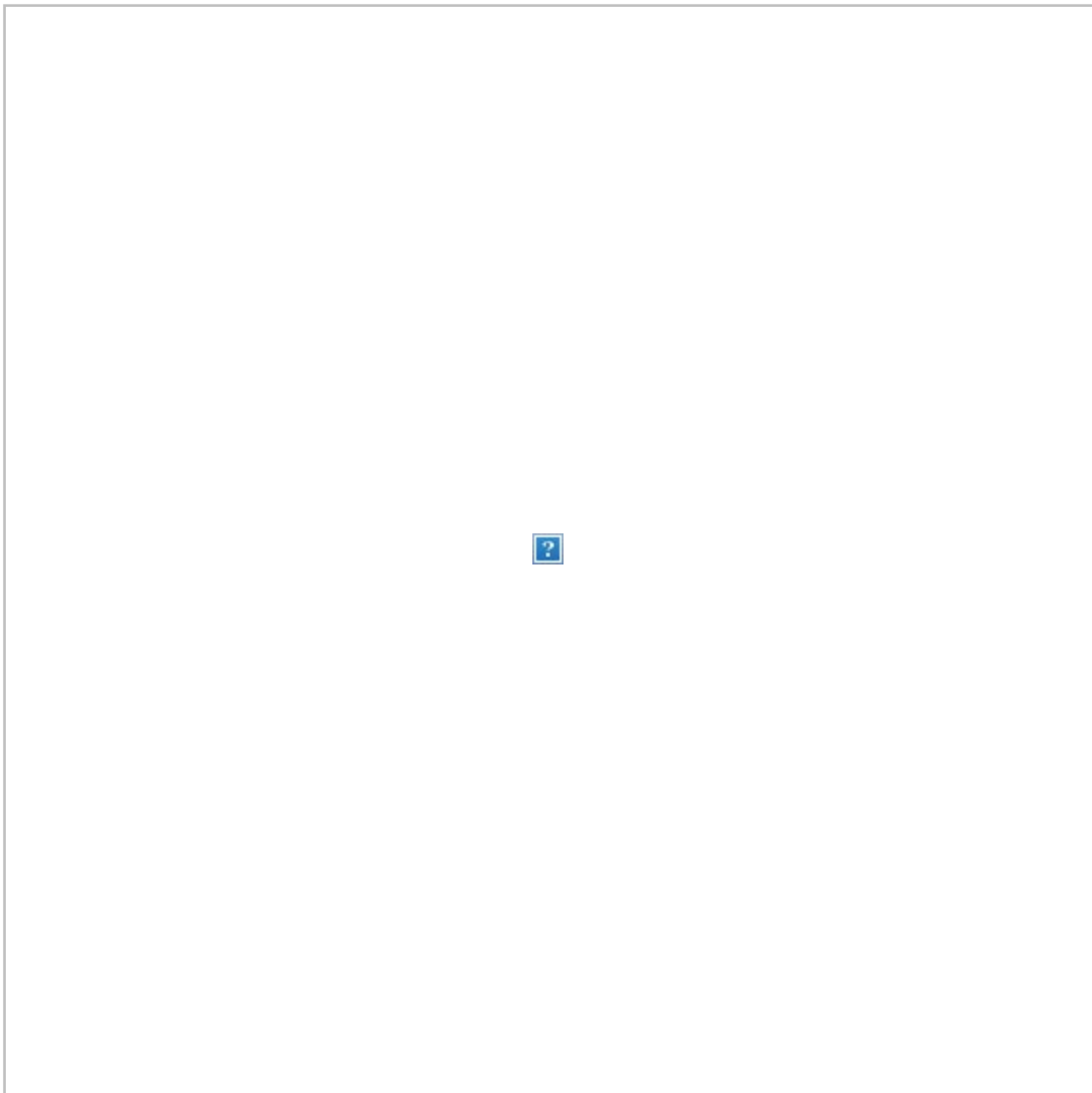


Republican officials and lawmakers are at odds over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, per a CNN reporter:



Rudy Giuliani falsely blamed Twitter after a digital marketing director in Atlanta [purchased](#) an Internet domain to incorporate an anti-Trump message into Giuliani's tweet about the G-20 summit:



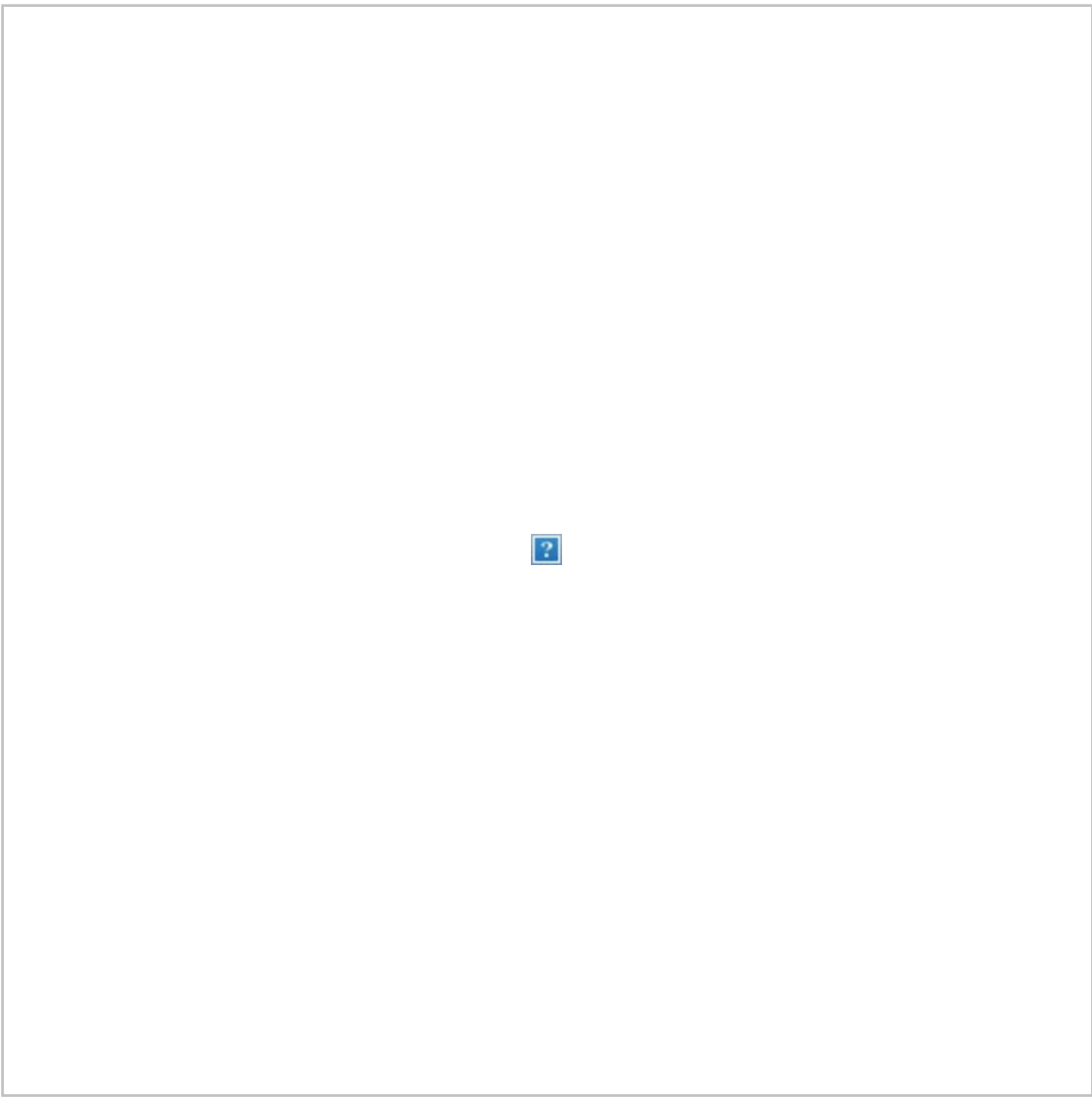


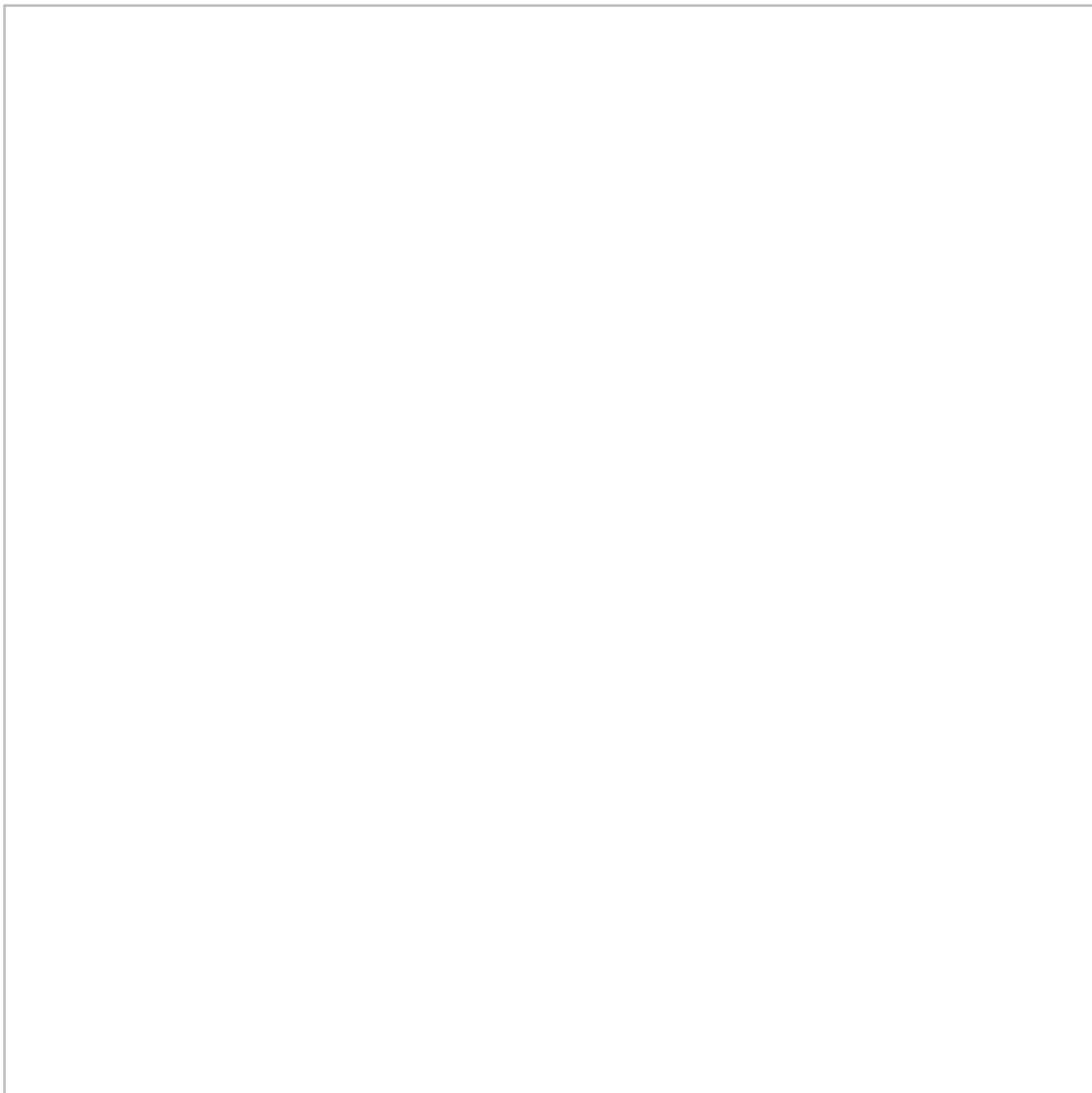
The Pentagon had a rather misleading typo in a statement on the troop deployment at the border, per a BuzzFeed News reporter:



(Defense officials quickly issued a correction.)

Wisconsin's Democratic senator spoke out against recent moves by the state legislature to limit the power of the incoming Democratic governor:





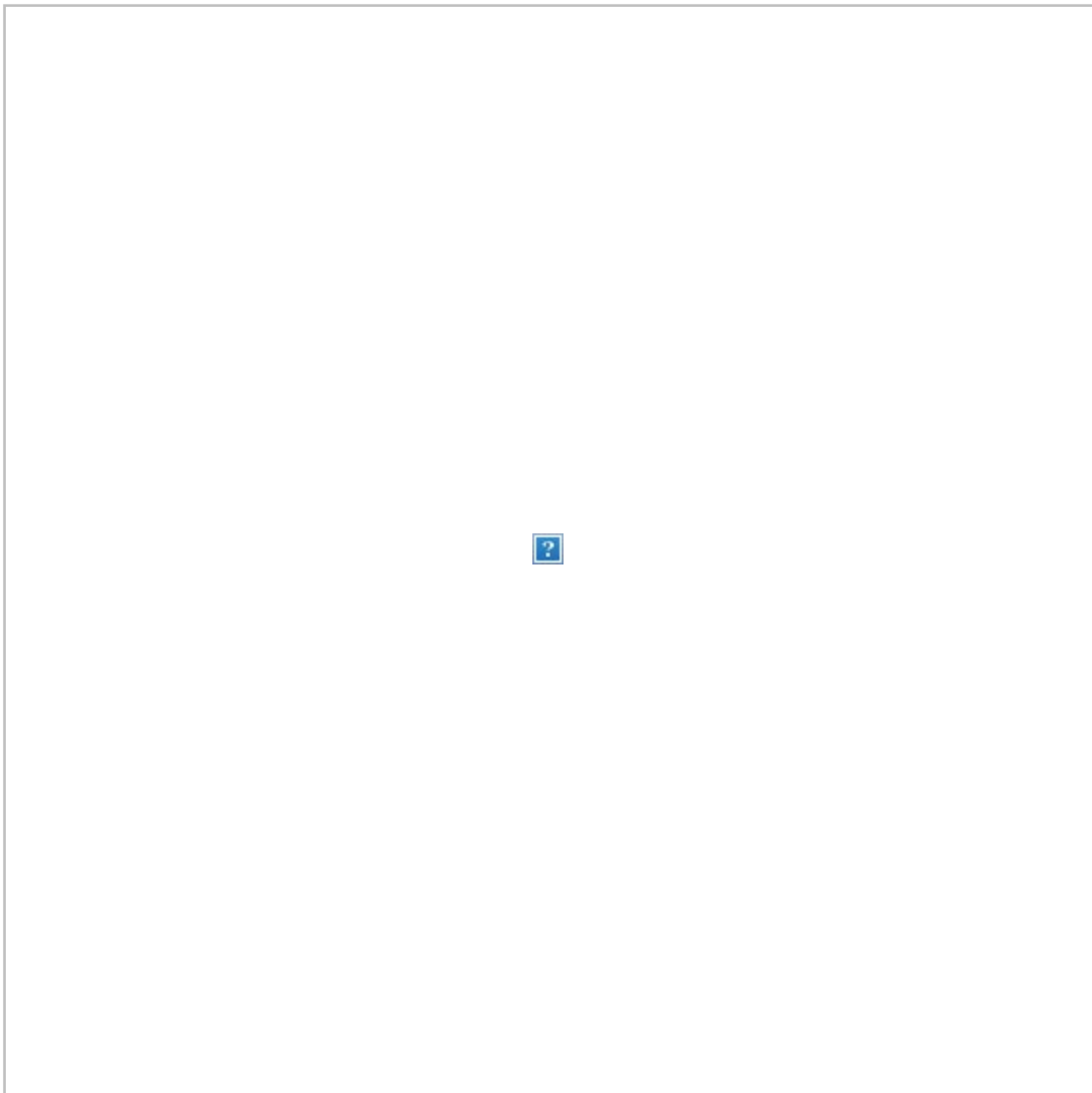
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) continues to gain more support for her "Green New Deal":



A House Democrat attacked Republican accusations of voter fraud as the investigation into North Carolina's disputed congressional race continues:



But a writer for The Fix noted this important distinction about the North Carolina race:



And this tweet from Barack Obama was the second-most liked tweet of 2018, according to Twitter's newly released data:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York Times, “ [‘Transactional’ Sex and a Secret Resignation Letter: Takeaways From a Report on Les Moonves](#),” by Rachel Abrams and David Enrich: “The outside lawyers were told by multiple people that CBS had an employee ‘who was ‘on call’ to perform oral sex’ on Mr. Moonves. According to the draft report: ‘A number of employees were aware of this and believed that the woman was protected from discipline or termination as a



result of it.' ... The report found that, in addition to consensual relationships and affairs, 'Moonves received oral sex from at least 4 CBS employees under circumstances that sound transactional and improper to the extent that there was no hint of any relationship, romance, or reciprocity.'"

-- The Atlantic, "[It's Almost Impossible to Be a Mom in Television News](#)," by Julianna Goldman: "According to a report by the Women's Media Center, television viewers are less likely to see women reporting the news today than just a few years ago. At the Big Three networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—combined, men were responsible for reporting 75 percent of the evening news broadcasts over three months in 2016, while women were responsible for reporting only 25 percent—a drop from 32 percent two years earlier. What could be contributing to this? Much has been written about anti-mom bias and the so-called motherhood penalty in industries from law to finance to tech. ... TV news is that and then some for working moms."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**" 'Damn Right, I'm a White Nationalist' Declares Texas GOP Platform Committee**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Sanders campaign drops \$300k on private jet travel," from [VT Digger](#):**

**Member,” from the Texas Observer:** “At the Texas Republican Party’s 2018 convention, Ray Myers was a part of a select group of activists charged with crafting the platform for the biggest and most influential state party in the country. Myers is also a white nationalist, a fact that he declared last week. ‘Damn Right, I’m a WHITE NATIONALIST and very Proud of it,’ Myers wrote in a Facebook post last Tuesday. Myers is a 74-year-old activist who has been involved in GOP politics for decades. But ‘the pivotal political moment came

“Sen. Bernie Sanders 2018 re-election campaign spent almost \$300,000 on private jet service for a recent cross country tour to stump for Democrats and test the presidential waters. According to federal campaign finance reports, Friends of Bernie Sanders, the senator’s official 2018 Senate campaign committee, spent \$297,685.50 with Apollo Jets, a private charter jet service headquartered in New York. The report does not break down the number of trips or where they were taken. ... Sanders came under criticism in 2017 after his

when Obama came on the scene. I knew immediately that America was in trouble,' he said in an Empower Texans profile.”

senate campaign spent a smaller amount with Apollo Jets — \$37,568. He was ridiculed for using a luxury service while criticizing the wealthy.”

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** and the first lady will attend the funeral of Bush 41 at the Washington National Cathedral today.

The president will also attend the Army-Navy Game on Saturday in Philadelphia, [Jake Russell reports](#).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“I have been at probably every powerful table that you can think of, I have worked at nonprofits, I have been at foundations, I have worked in corporations, served on corporate boards, I have been at G-summits, I have sat in at the U.N.: They are not that smart.” — Michelle Obama offering advice to young women on how to avoid self-doubt. ([Newsweek](#))



## **NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington could see flurries or even snow showers today.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “A bit of energy passing through the atmosphere could produce a few flurries or snow showers during the day. Can’t totally rule out a quick dusting if a heavier snow shower comes through. Otherwise we’re mostly cloudy and cold, with morning temperatures near 30 to the mid-30s, and afternoon highs stalling in the mid-30s to near 40.”

**-- The Capitals lost to the Golden Knights 5-3.**  
([Isabelle Khurshudyan](#))

**-- The Nationals have agreed to a deal with left-handed pitcher Patrick Corbin.** [From Chelsea Janes](#): “The terms of the deal are not yet known, though Yahoo and others have reported it is worth \$140 million and does include that ever-present Nationals' specialty — deferred money. The deal fills Washington’s most glaring hole, providing a proven arm behind Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg.”

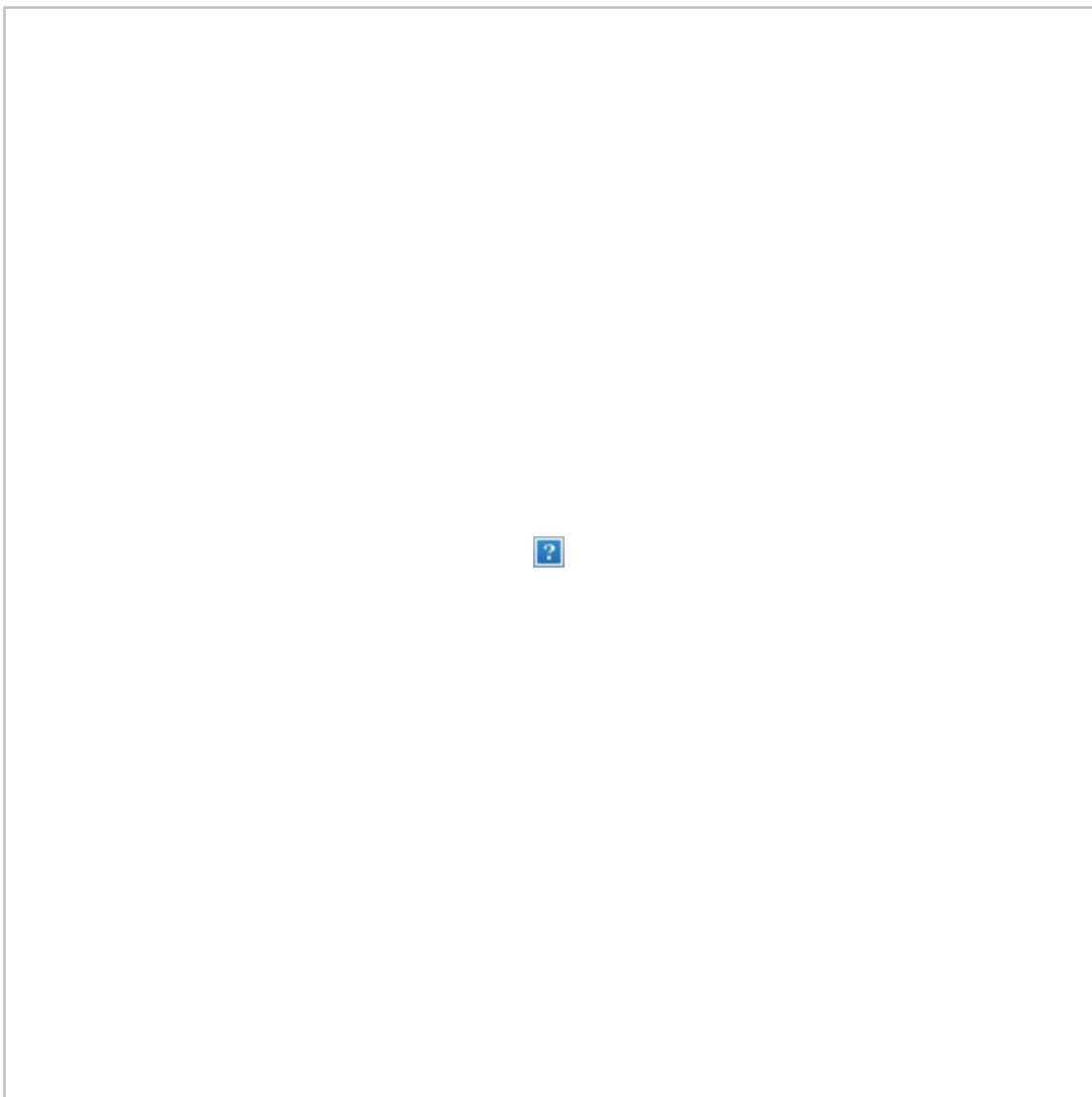
**-- The Office of Congressional Ethics found that outgoing Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-Va.) and his wife**

**had congressional staffers perform their personal errands.** [Jenna Portnoy reports](#): “The report found insufficient evidence for the claim that Garrett paid an employee out of his campaign coffers to do personal errands. ... On at least two occasions, Garrett or his wife asked a staff member to change the oil in the congressman’s car. A staffer went to Ikea and Costco with his wife, Flanna Garrett, during the workday. Staffers also frequently fed and walked the congressman’s dog, which was often present in the congressional office, and cared for the dog on their personal time.”

**-- The D.C. Council gave final approval to a bill decriminalizing Metro fare evasion.** [Faiz Siddiqui reports](#): “The measure passed amid staunch opposition from Metro and its board, which argued the transit agency loses more than \$25 million a year to fare evasion and that lessening the penalties for such an offense would only exacerbate the problem and lead to more crime. Council members and activists rejected that line of argument and said decriminalizing the act was an important step toward addressing disproportionate policing of African Americans on the transit system.”

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

This clip of Flynn chanting “lock her up” at the Republican National Convention really didn’t age well:

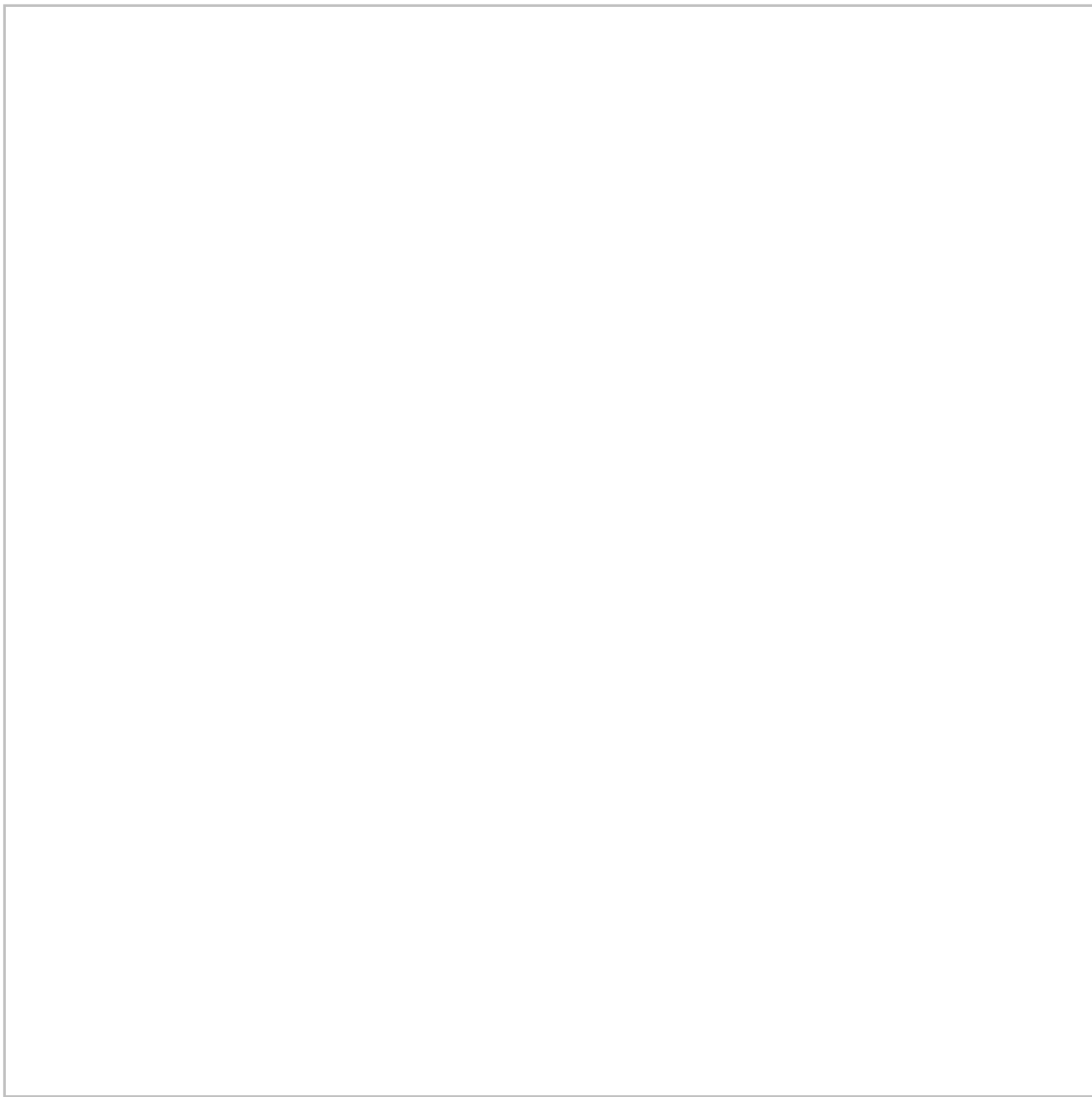


Michael Flynn leads chants of 'lock her up' at Republican Convention

Late-night hosts mocked Trump's self-description as  
"Tariff Man":



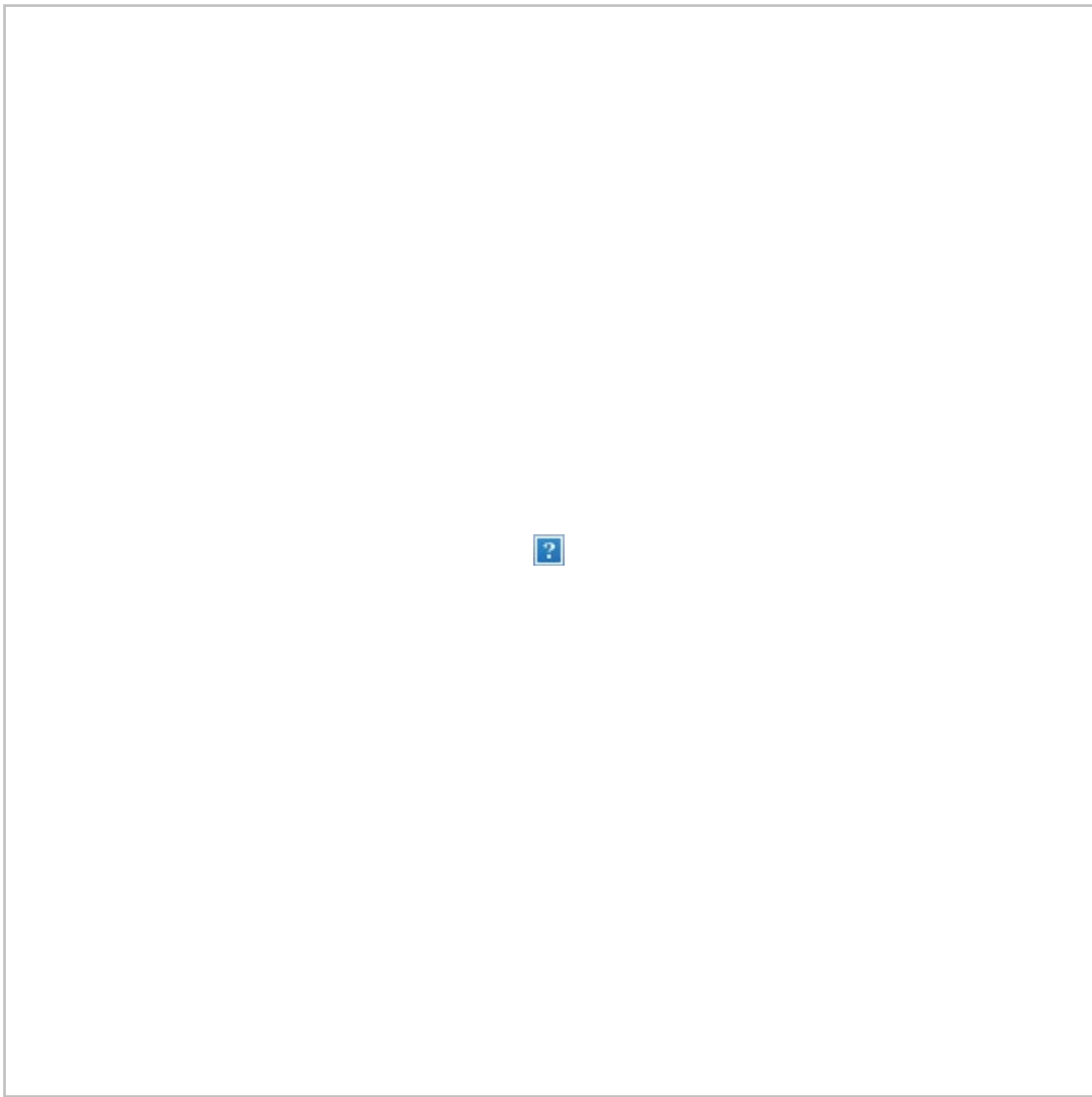
Tariff Man Is Going to be Angry About French Fries



Tariff Man May Have Spoken Too Soon

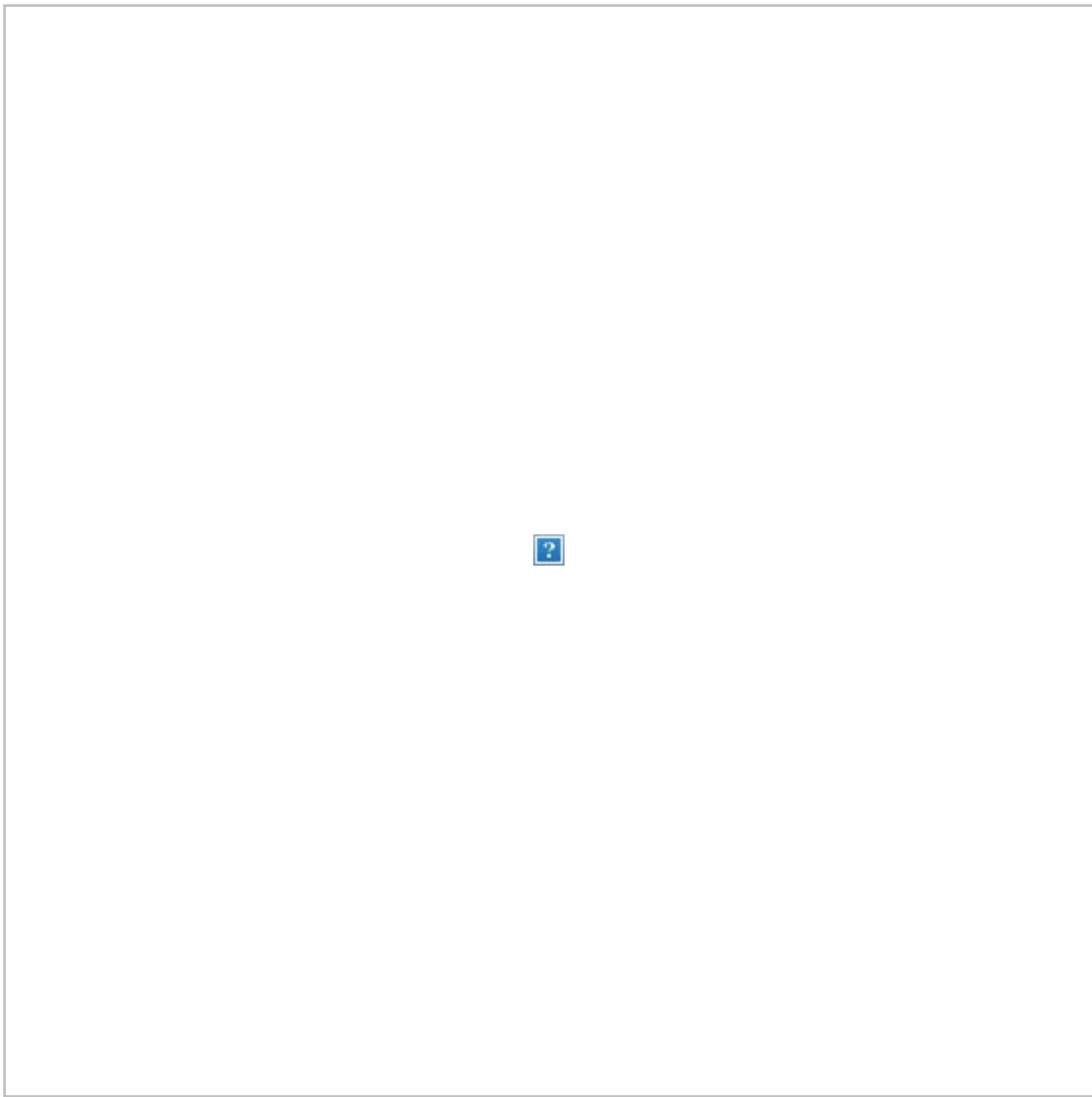
**Bush's service dog, Sully, visited his casket at the Capitol:**





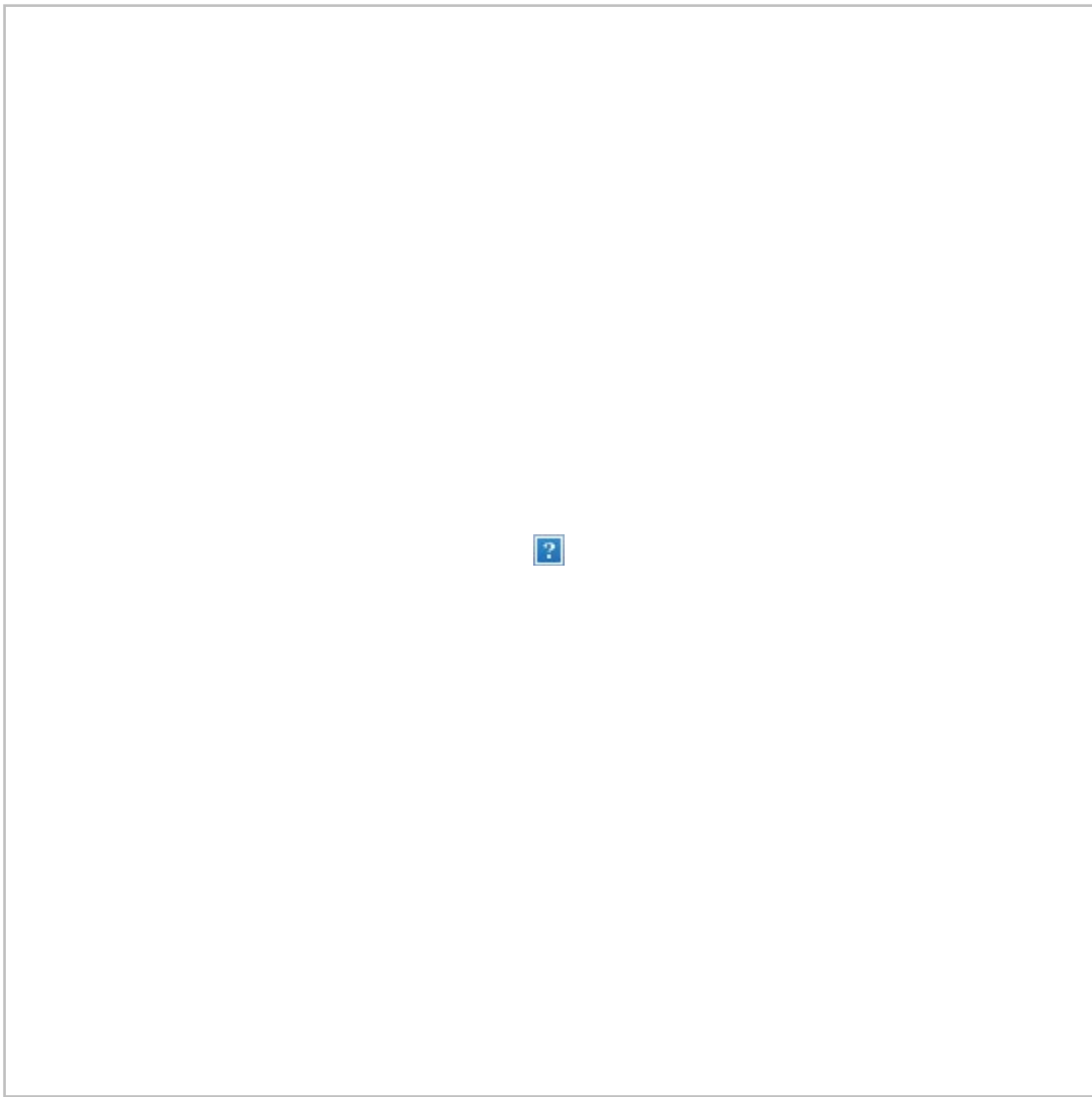
Bush's service dog Sully visits his coffin at the Capitol

The Post talked to the owner of Bush's favorite Houston restaurant to find out how he remembered the former president, a loyal customer for more than 35 years:



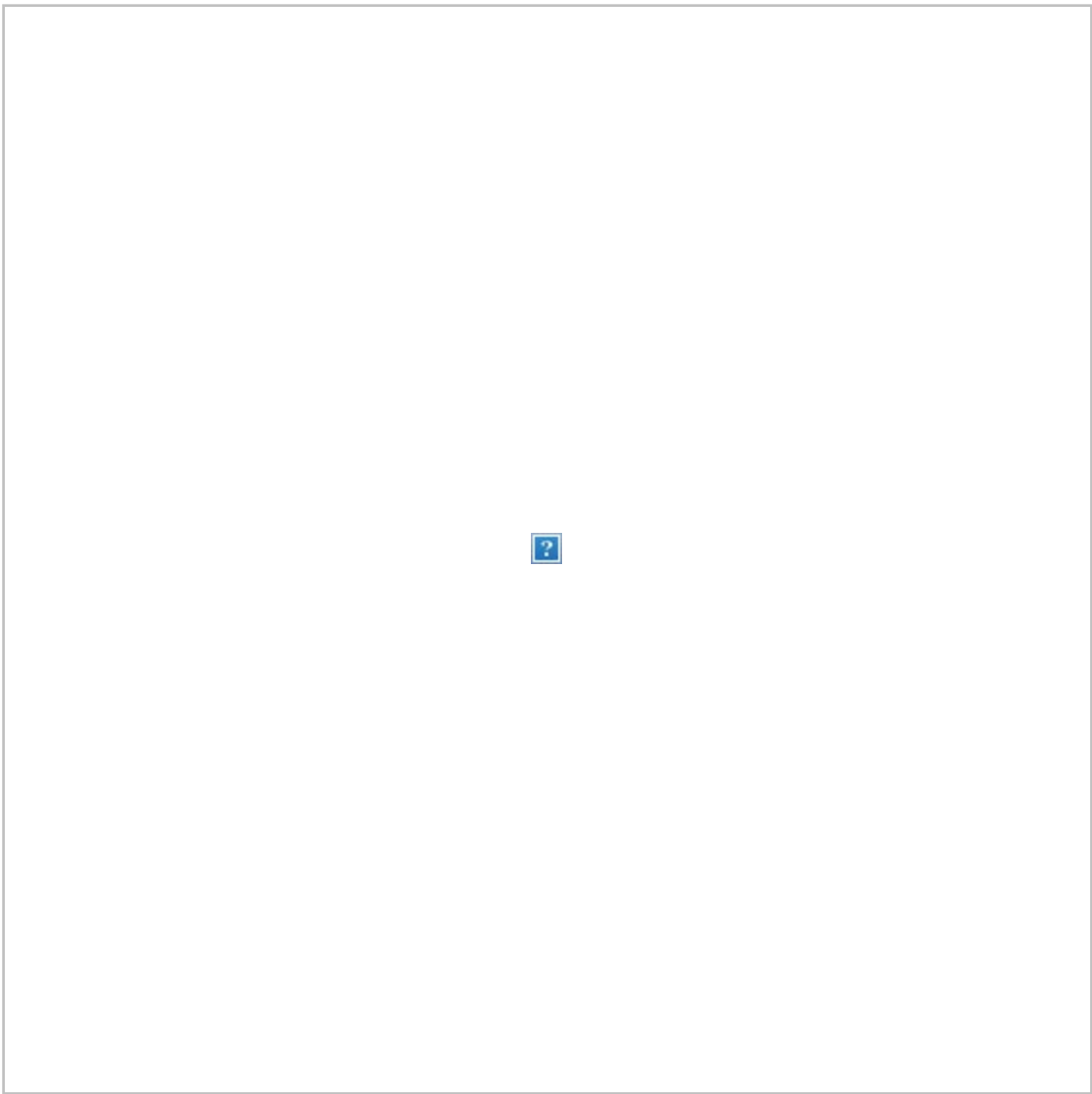
'Part of our family': How Bush's favorite Houston restaurant remembers him

The Fact Checker [outlined](#) how Trump has spun government data to present the best possible picture:



How President Trump twists government data to suit the political moment

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Polish President Andrzej Duda shook hands "Predator-style" on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference:



Schwarzenegger and Poland's Duda shake hands 'Predator-style'

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# The Daily 202



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## Flynn sentencing memo hints at how

# much Mueller knows that we still don't



Mueller suggests no jail time for Michael Flynn, cites his 'substantial assistance'



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** The most striking part of Bob Mueller's sentencing memo recommending Michael Flynn serve no prison time, because of his "substantial" assistance to "several ongoing

**investigations,” is how much got blacked out. It’s a reminder of how many shoes might still drop.**

The special counsel revealed in [a 13-page court filing](#) late Tuesday night that President Trump’s former national security adviser has given 19 interviews to his office or other Justice Department attorneys, in addition to providing “documents and communications.”

**Tantalizingly, Mueller teases that “the defendant has provided substantial assistance in a criminal investigation.” Then there are 22 fully redacted lines of text.** That is in addition to the special counsel’s probe of “any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald J. Trump.”

Mueller has asked for several postponements in making a sentencing recommendation since Flynn pleaded guilty to a single felony count of making false statements to the FBI last December, a full year ago now. **Just how much he’s gotten out of the career intelligence officer has been a closely held secret. Now we know it’s a lot, but what exactly Mueller got remains a mystery.**

“While this [document] seeks to provide a comprehensive description of the benefit the government has thus far obtained from the defendant’s substantial assistance, some of that benefit may not be fully realized at this time because the investigations in which he has provided

assistance are ongoing,” said Mueller.

**The special counsel tells the judge that Flynn flipping when he did prompted others to cooperate and was “particularly valuable because he was one of the few people with long-term and firsthand insight regarding events and issues under investigation.”**

Flynn is one of five Trump aides who have pleaded guilty as a result of the special counsel’s investigation. Mueller, who fought in Vietnam as a Marine, noted that Flynn spent 33 years in the Army, including five years of combat duty, before retiring as a three-star lieutenant general.

**“The defendant’s record of military and public service distinguish him from every other person who has been charged,” the special counsel wrote.**

“However, senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards. The defendant’s extensive government service should have made him particularly aware of the harm caused by providing false information to the government, as well as the rules governing work performed on behalf of a foreign government.”

**-- Flynn's son celebrated the news that his dad probably won't go to prison:**





**-- Mueller will file two more documents on Friday:** He is scheduled to outline details of Michael Cohen's cooperation in a letter to the judge overseeing the former Trump consigliere's sentencing. He's also due to submit a filing explaining the ways that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort breached his plea agreement by being dishonest with prosecutors.



What happened between Flynn, Trump and Comey? The Fact Checker's Timeline

**-- Mueller biographer Garrett Graff [outlines 14 questions](#) this morning that the special counsel knows the answers to and that we don't:** “Decoding Mueller’s 17-month investigation has been a publicly frustrating exercise, as individual puzzle pieces, like Flynn's sentencing memo, often don’t hint at the final assembled picture—nor even tell us if we’re looking at a single interlocking puzzle, in which all the pieces are related, or multiple, separate, unrelated ones,” Graff

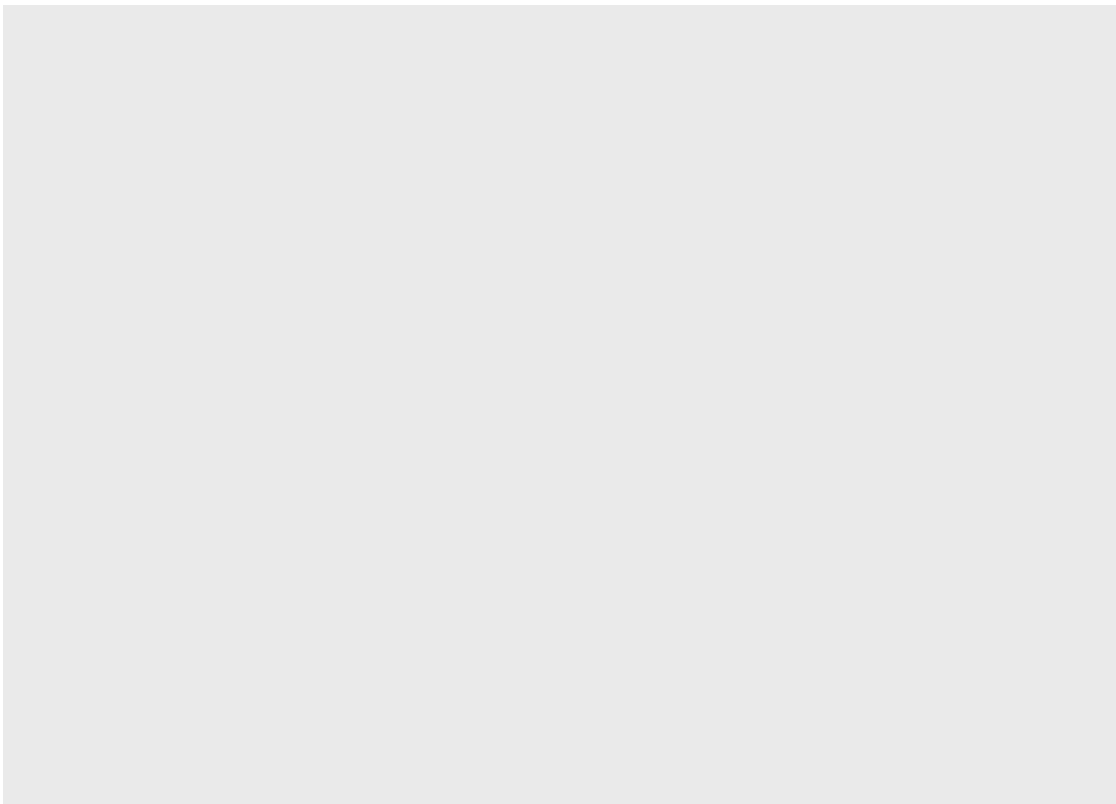
writes in a new piece [for Wired magazine](#). “Mueller’s careful, methodical strategy often only reveals itself in hindsight, as the significance of previous steps becomes clear with subsequent ones.”

1. Is Matt Whitaker overseeing the Russia probe—and is his appointment as attorney general even legal?
2. Is Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross involved in any of this?
3. How closely related is the investigation of the 2016 election to the Trump Organization’s financial scandals?
4. How did Trump himself, and the Trump family, react to Cohen’s updates on various schemes?
5. What has Felix Sater told Mueller?
6. What has George Nader told Mueller?
7. What happens to Cozy Bear?
8. Who is the (unindicted) Atlanta traveler?
9. Why was Trump’s team so concerned about the transition documents?
10. How much more of the Steele Dossier is true?
11. Is it a coincidence that the Internet Research Agency scheduled a “Down with Hillary” rally in New York, weeks in advance, for the day after WikiLeaks dumped the DNC emails?
12. Why isn’t Mueller prosecuting Maria Butina and Elena Alekseevna Khusyaynova?
13. Why is Mueller charging Michael Cohen?
14. Was the Guardian correct in reporting that Paul

Manafort met with Julian Assange?

**-- Rudy Giuliani said he's not concerned that Flynn has given Mueller anything that would implicate Trump:** "If he had information to share with Mueller that hurt the president, you would know it by now," the president's attorney [told NBC](#). "There's a Yiddish word that fits. They don't have bupkis."

**-- New Yorker writer Jeff Toobin thinks Trump ought to be nervous about Mueller's assertion that "senior government leaders should be held to the highest standards."** "I would be a little nervous if I were the people involved in the obstruction of justice investigation, starting, of course, with the president of the United States," he said [on CNN](#).





CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

# The power to strengthen communities

We work every day to finance progress and spur entrepreneurship. To help people build financial know-how and strengthen their communities. The power to make a difference is in all of us.





Acting attorney general Matt Whitaker departs a Medal of Freedom ceremony at the White House. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS:**

**-- More than 400 former DOJ employees signed a statement opposing Whitaker's appointment as acting attorney general. [NBC News's Pete Williams reports](#):** "Because Whitaker hasn't been confirmed by the Senate, his qualifications have not been publicly reviewed and there's been no vetting for potential conflicts of

interest, they say. ... The former DOJ employees call on Trump to nominate someone to succeed Jeff Sessions, whom the president fired last month, and, in the meantime, to put a Senate-confirmed person in the acting attorney general position. Protect Democracy, which organized the effort, said that the signatories 'have served under administrations of both parties' and that the vast majority were non-partisan career civil servants."

**-- Whitaker has provided no clarity on how he is handling potential conflicts of interest.** [CNN's Laura Jarrett reports](#): "For now, officials in Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's office continue to handle management of [Mueller's investigation], but Whitaker's ability to pull rank as the acting attorney general and overrule Rosenstein's judgment may prove crucial in coming weeks as the investigation winds down — leading to mounting questions about what steps Whitaker has taken, or not taken, to heed any ethics advice after now serving 28 days as the nation's top law enforcement officer. Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee renewed their concerns Tuesday, writing in a letter to Justice officials that ... 'the Department has not produced prior versions of Mr. Whitaker's financial disclosures, any ethics agreements he entered into with the Department, or any other ethics-related counseling he has received.' "

**-- Trump ally Roger Stone invoked the Fifth Amendment to avoid sharing documents and**

**testimony with the Senate Judiciary Committee.**

[Politico's Kyle Cheney reports](#): “ ‘Mr. Stone's invocation of his Fifth Amendment privilege must be understood by all to be the assertion of a Constitutional right by an innocent citizen who denounces secrecy,’ Stone's attorney, Grant Smith, said. ... In [his letter], Stone's attorney said his client simply wants his information aired in public, and not subject to selective leaks that marked his closed-door testimony to the House Intelligence Committee last year.”

**-- Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump's tweets praising Stone for not testifying against him and berating Michael Cohen add to “a growing body of evidence that the President is attempting to obstruct justice.”**

“We must ensure that the Mueller investigation proceeds without political interference, and that any and all acts of obstruction are exposed, either by Mueller in his report or by the Congress,” Schiff said in a statement. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))

**-- Former Trump campaign aide Sam Nunberg will meet next month with the Senate Intelligence Committee.** [Robert Costa reports](#): “Nunberg confirmed his pending meeting in an interview Tuesday with The Post, saying, ‘I’m happy to cooperate and appear’ for what is likely to be a closed session with committee staffers. ... Nunberg’s visit is the latest sign that the Senate Intelligence Committee’s investigation is going to



carry into the new year.”

**-- New White House counsel Pat Cipollone will start in the role on Monday after a nearly two-month delay.**

[From Politico's Eliana Johnson](#): “Even before assuming his official duties, Cipollone has reached out to several lawyers to staff an office responsible for everything from judicial nominations to federal litigation to presidential pardons. ... The new hires will begin a badly needed rebuilding of the counsel’s office. ... **A longer-than-expected security clearance process, however, prevented Cipollone from assuming the job**, even as the Mueller probe advances and a House Democratic majority draws ever nearer to assuming power. That has left Cipollone playing catchup as he tries to fill vacant posts in an office whose staff numbers in the dozens.”

**-- Another high-ranking FBI official who played key roles in the investigations into Hillary Clinton’s email server and the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russia is leaving the bureau.** [The Wall Street Journal's Byron Tau reports](#): “Bill Priestap, who currently serves as assistant director of the [FBI’s] counterintelligence division, will leave his post by the end of the year. ... Mr. Priestap’s retirement is unrelated to the controversies over the handling of the 2016 investigations, according to a person familiar with the matter. ... **After Mr. Priestap’s departure, none of the high-ranking bureau officials involved in the two**

investigations will remain with the bureau.”



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



Republican secretary of state candidate Brad Raffensperger greets supporters in Augusta, Ga. (Michael Holahan/Augusta Chronicle/AP)

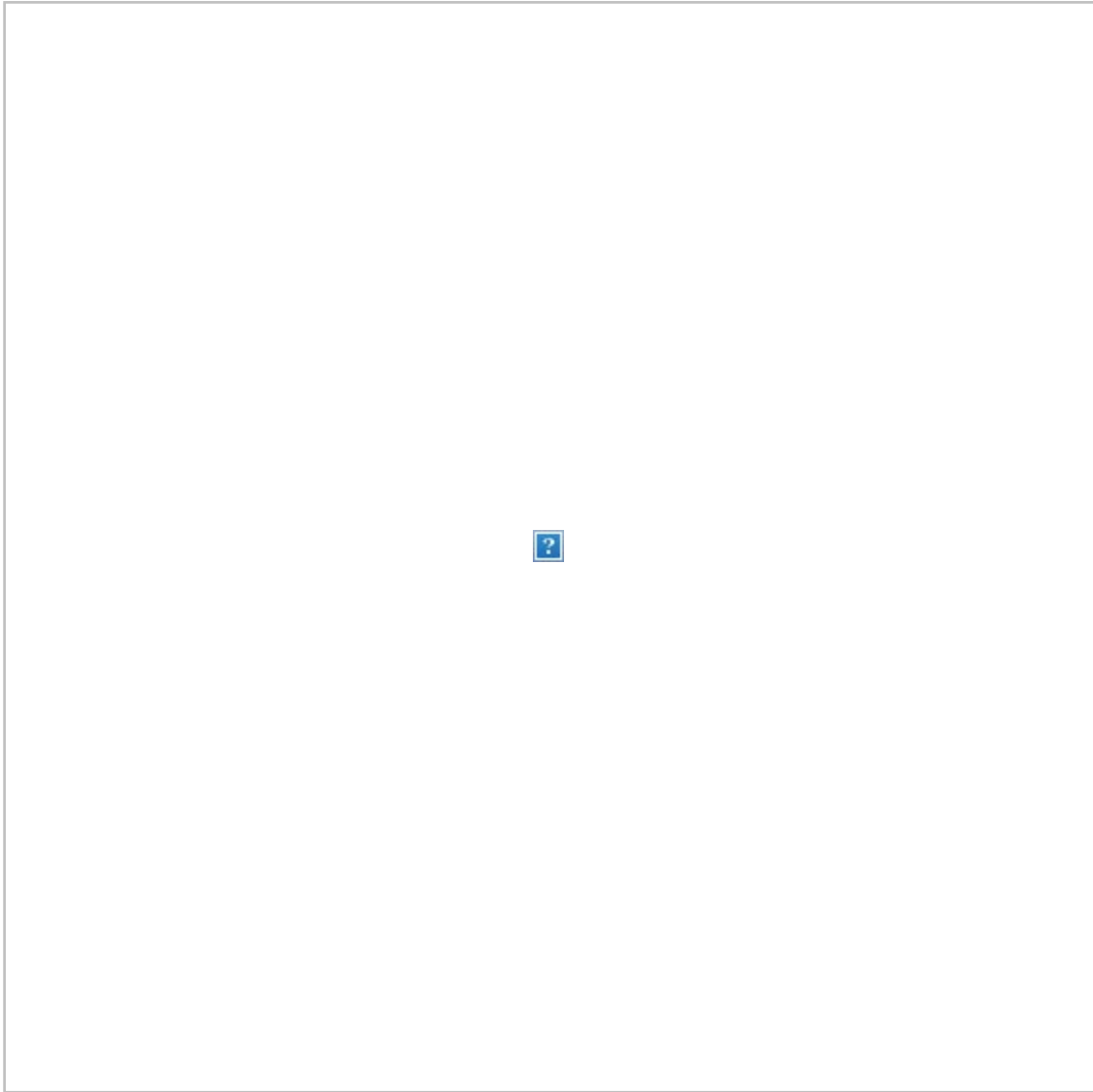
**-- Republican Brad Raffensperger won the runoff race to become Georgia's secretary of state, defeating former Democratic congressman John Barrow. [Matt Viser reports](#):** "Raffensperger's election continues a losing streak for Georgia Democrats, who have not won a statewide election since 2010, and ensures that stricter election laws pushed by state Republicans remain in

place barring successful legal challenges. ... The two candidates were separated by less than 20,000 votes in the first election, with Raffensperger running slightly ahead. Democrats were unable to harness the energy that they had during the November election, however, and Raffensperger led by more than four points Tuesday with 98 percent of precincts reporting. **Turnout appeared to be only about a third of the November number.**"

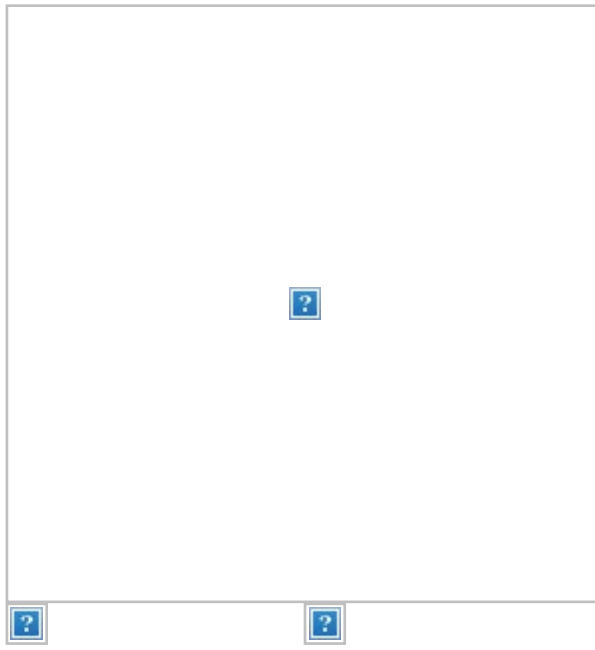
**-- In another runoff, Little Rock elected an African American mayor, Frank Scott Jr., a 35-year-old banker who was formerly state highway commissioner.** The Arkansas capital has had two previous black mayors, but they were appointed by fellow members of the city council. ([KARK](#))

**-- The fate of the Weekly Standard — which has continued to critique Trump from the right long after most other conservative publications — is uncertain.** [CNN's Oliver Darcy reports](#): "The magazine's precarious position comes after its leadership spent months searching for a buyer ... However, [publisher] MediaDC recently informed The Weekly Standard's leadership that the company was no longer interested in a sale ... Instead, Ryan McKibben, the chairman of MediaDC, asked to meet with [Editor in Chief Stephen Hayes] in a meeting tentatively scheduled for late next week ... [He] also requested the entire staff of The Weekly Standard be made available following the meeting. That request,

coupled with MediaDC's Monday announcement that its other conservative news organization, The Washington Examiner, would be expanding its magazine into a weekly publication, has left The Weekly Standard's leadership worrying."



Trump International Hotel is seen in Washington. (Alex Brandon/AP)



## GET SMART FAST:

1. **The attorneys general of Maryland and D.C. have issued subpoenas to as many as 13 of Trump's private entities in their emoluments lawsuit involving Trump International Hotel.** The subpoenas seek information on which foreign governments have paid the Trump Organization, data the attorneys general hope will bolster their argument that the president is violating the Constitution by improperly benefiting from his office. ([Jonathan O'Connell, Ann E. Marimow and David A. Fahrenthold](#))
2. **France's nationwide protests are the latest backlash against taxes meant to fight climate change.** French President Emmanuel Macron's

decision to temporarily suspend a set of carbon taxes is another example of how politically unpopular such environmental policies can be. ([Steven Mufson and James McAuley](#))

3. **Many climate scientists and policy experts have become pessimistic about countries adopting proposals robust enough to slow the advancement of climate change.** At the U.N. climate conference in Poland, several major countries are expected to announce they have failed to meet the targets they set in Paris three years ago. ([Steven Mufson](#))
4. **The Justice Department charged four people with tax evasion in connection with the 2016 Panama Papers.** The indictment, centered on accusations that the people spent decades hiding tens of millions of dollars from the IRS, marks the first time U.S. officials have issued charges related to the Panama Papers. ([Devlin Barrett](#))
5. **A new report alleges Leslie Moonves misled investigators and destroyed evidence during a probe into the sexual misconduct allegations against the former CBS CEO.** Lawyers who conducted the inquiry said CBS had justification to deny Moonves his \$120 million severance after he “engaged in multiple acts of serious nonconsensual

sexual misconduct in and outside of the workplace, both before and after he came to CBS in 1995.” ([New York Times](#))

6. **Nikki Haley plans to stay in New York and work on a second book after stepping down as U.N. ambassador.** The former South Carolina governor said she would return to the state, where she recently sold her home, after her son finishes high school. ([Charleston Post and Courier](#))
7. **A West Palm Beach, Fla., trial that was expected to include testimony from women who have accused billionaire Jeffrey Epstein of sexual abuse was settled moments before it was supposed to begin.** Epstein apologized for making “false and hurtful allegations” against Bradley Edwards, the attorney for some of Epstein’s accusers. Epstein had claimed Edwards ginned up the sexual molestation accusations as part of a fundraising scheme. ([Lori Rozsa](#))
8. **Interest in becoming a police officer is on the decline across the United States.** In Seattle, where the starting salary is \$79,000, applications have dropped by nearly 50 percent. And departments are struggling to retain new officers, some of whom leave after less than a year. ([Tom Jackman](#))





Bob Dole stands to pay respect to George H.W. Bush

## **BUSH 41 REMEMBERED:**

**-- Mourners gathered at the Capitol to honor George H.W Bush before his funeral today at Washington National Cathedral. [Marc Fisher, Marissa J. Lang and Elise Viebeck report](#):** “They came to attention as World War II veterans, including former senator Bob Dole, who rose from his wheelchair, jaw quivering, to deliver a quick, crisp salute. Mostly, they offered a final

farewell to George Herbert Walker Bush as fellow Americans, eager to honor decency, moderation and a commitment to making things work, all of which he embodied. The Capitol Rotunda was open to all Tuesday, and they came in a manner befitting the 41st president — not in huge numbers, but steadily; with grace and seriousness of purpose; with nothing disparaging to say, but with a recaptured sense that, even now, we're all in this together.”

**-- Bush's funeral has created an informal reunion for former members of his administration who have gathered to celebrate his life.** [The New York Times's Peter Baker reports](#): “More than a quarter-century after the original Bush administration left Washington and nearly a decade after the departure of the second, the men and women who once ran the nation and, by extension, the world were back. On the eve of the state funeral for President George Bush, they caught up, shared stories and honored those no longer around. ‘Everybody’s a mixture of sad and joyful because we’re celebrating a great life,’ said Jonathan Bush, the younger brother of the 41st president and uncle of the 43rd.”

**-- The United States will recognize a national day of mourning today for Bush.** [From Kimberly Winston](#): “Flags will be at half-staff; federal offices and the stock market will be closed. Millions of people, here and abroad, are expected to watch a live broadcast of Bush’s

state funeral from Washington National Cathedral.”

**-- Bush’s death has sparked debates about his legacy on race issues.** [From Sean Sullivan](#): “During his first campaign for the Senate in Texas, [Bush] opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the landmark law banning many forms of racial discrimination. But four years later, as a member of the House, he voted for watershed legislation making it illegal to refuse to sell or rent housing on the basis of race. When he ran for president two decades after that, Bush and his allies made an African American man convicted of murder and rape a central focus of his campaign’s effort to portray his opponent as weak on crime — stoking a controversy that [reemerged](#) in the racially charged atmosphere of this year’s midterm elections.”

**-- Trump’s use of a motorcade to visit George W. Bush at Blair House, which is 250 yards from the White House, triggered some light criticism.** [David Nakamura reports](#): “The Trumps spent 23 minutes visiting with Bush and his wife, Laura, by all accounts a cordial meeting in which the former president exchanged kisses on the cheek with the current first lady at the curb. ... The need for the motorcade, however, prompted questions, and a healthy dose of speculation, about why the Trumps were unable — or unwilling — to simply walk across the street. ‘Presidents, including the last one, have made the walk before,’ observed Edward Price, who served as

National Security Council spokesman in the Obama administration. ... [But in] her autobiography 'Becoming,' former first lady Michelle Obama wrote that the Secret Service sometimes requested she or her husband 'take the motorcade instead of walking in the fresh air' to Blair House for security reasons."



Graham: Saudi crown prince 'complicit' in Khashoggi murder

## **KHASHOGGI FALLOUT:**

**-- Contradicting assertions from Trump and members**

**of his Cabinet, Republican senators said a briefing from CIA Director Gina Haspel on the killing of Post contributing columnist Jamal Khashoggi has convinced them of the Saudi crown prince's involvement.** [Shane Harris and Karoun Demirjian report:](#)

“ ‘There’s not a smoking gun — there’s a smoking saw,’ said Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.), referring to the bone saw that investigators believe was used to dismember Khashoggi ... Armed with classified details provided by [Haspel], senators shredded the arguments put forward by senior administration officials who had earlier insisted that the evidence of [Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's] alleged role was inconclusive. The gulf that has emerged between Republican lawmakers and the president over how to respond to the journalist’s killing appeared to widen after Tuesday’s briefing, with Graham, one of Trump’s closest Senate allies, announcing that he was no longer willing to work with the crown prince, whom the White House regards as one of its most important allies in the Middle East.

“In recent days, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have said that no single piece of evidence irrefutably links Mohammed to the killing. But the senators, in effect, said that did not matter, because the evidence they heard convinced them beyond the shadow of a doubt. **‘If the crown prince went in front of a jury, he would be convicted in 30 minutes,’ said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the chairman of the**

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee.** ... Graham leveled sharp criticism at Pompeo and Mattis, saying he thought they were 'following the lead of the president.' He called them 'good soldiers.' "

**-- The GOP senators essentially accused Trump of helping Saudi Arabia try to cover up the killing.** [From Aaron Blake](#): "Graham said Tuesday that you'd have to be 'willfully blind' to not know Mohammed was 'intricately involved' — a clear rebuke of Trump's argument that this whole thing resides in some kind of gray area. ... **'If they were in a Democratic administration,' Graham said of Pompeo and Mattis, 'I would be all over them for being in the pocket of Saudi Arabia.'** ... Corker also suggested that the briefing last week, which featured Pompeo and Mattis but not Haspel, was entirely misleading. When asked whether there was a difference in the message about Mohammed's culpability, Corker compared it to the 'difference between darkness and sunshine.' "

**-- Not all Republicans: A GOP congressman justified Trump's response to Khashoggi's killing by saying, "Journalists disappear all over the country."** [Felicia Sonmez reports](#): "[Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah)] echoed Trump, telling CNN's Brianna Keilar that 'no one can say' for certain what happened and maintaining that it is in U.S. interests not to allow the relationship with Saudi Arabia to rupture. 'We have to have a relationship with

some players that we don't agree with,' Stewart said. 'Journalists disappear all over the country. Twenty journalists have been killed in Mexico. You don't think it's happened in Turkey and China? Of course it does. And yet, we have to have a relationship with these individuals, or with these countries.' ”



'Tough' day for Wall Street as Dow plunges 799 points

## **THE TRADE WAR:**

**-- U.S. stock markets fell 3 percent as skepticism**

**grew of Trump's claims the United States and China reached a trade breakthrough during the G-20 summit.** "The reversals more than erased the tepid gains Monday in reaction to Trump's initial account of what he said were promises made by the Chinese government," [Damian Paletta, David J. Lynch and Josh Dawsey report.](#) "Three days after Trump emerged from his dinner with [Chinese President Xi Jinping] touting an 'incredible' deal, U.S. and Chinese officials were offering different accounts of whether there was a 90-day deadline for progress in new trade talks, the schedule for China to increase its purchases of American farm and industrial products, and Beijing's plans to reduce or eliminate specific tariffs. **While Trump tweeted a day after the meeting that China would 'reduce and remove' tariffs on U.S. automobiles, his aides acknowledged privately Tuesday that China had made no such commitment. 'Nobody knows what the deal is,' said one top White House adviser** ... Late Tuesday in Washington, after doubts about the deal blew into the open and the market plunged, the Trump administration was able to take some solace from a Chinese Ministry of Commerce statement that acknowledged hopes of meeting a 90-day timetable. ...

**"In a series of Twitter posts Tuesday, the president threatened to slap additional import penalties on Chinese products if China did not make major changes in its economic relationship with the United**



**States.** ‘President Xi and I want this deal to happen, and it probably will,’ Trump wrote. ‘But if not remember, I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power.’ Tuesday night, the president bore down on the theme, tweeting: ‘We are either going to have a REAL DEAL with China, or no deal at all — at which point we will be charging major Tariffs against Chinese product being shipped into the United States.’ ”

**-- “Once again this week, world leaders, U.S. lawmakers and jittery investors have been reminded that Trump’s words cannot always be trusted,”**

[Damian Paletta and Philip Rucker write](#). “Global markets demand consistency and reliability, but Trump delivers neither. Instead, he makes knee-jerk announcements that surprise investors, lawmakers and even some of his own aides and advisers, who sometimes find themselves reversing course depending on the president’s whims.”

**-- China is secretly funding the creation of a new Boeing satellite that incorporates technology used by the U.S. military.** [The Wall Street Journal’s Brian](#)

[Spegele and Kate O’Keeffe report](#): “About \$200 million flowed to the satellite project from a state-owned Chinese financial firm in a complex deal that used offshore companies to channel China’s money to Boeing. ... Such technology would help fill in a missing piece of the puzzle

for China as it seeks to secure its status as a superpower alongside the U.S. It would bolster China's burgeoning space program, as well as initiatives to dominate cutting-edge industries and expand its influence in the developing world. A web of U.S. laws effectively prohibits exporting satellite technology to China, and its satellites lag far behind those made in America."



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, with the help of the Mary and Don Miller family from Plainfield, Wis., flipped the switch to light the Christmas tree in the State Capitol rotunda last night in Madison. (Steve Apps/Wisconsin State Journal/AP)

## **MORE MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- The National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's campaign arm, was the victim of a cyberattack during the 2018 election cycle. [Ellen Nakashima and Shane Harris report](#):** “It wasn’t known whether a foreign government was behind the intrusion into the computer networks of the [NRCC], a person familiar with the case said. But the intruder was ‘sophisticated, based on their tactics and methods,’ and the intrusion ‘was clearly designed to hide the tracks of who it was,’ this person said ... The committee discovered the breach in April, said a person familiar with the case. Officials conducted an internal investigation, contacted the bureau within days and ‘gave the FBI everything they asked for,’ the person said. ... **The NRCC intrusion bears similarities to the DNC breach in 2016.**”

**-- Wisconsin Republicans are moving forward with attempts to [limit](#) the power of incoming Democrats, despite public criticism and protests. [Dan Simmons and Felicia Sonmez report](#):** “By Tuesday evening, the Wisconsin Senate had passed the least controversial of the three lame-duck bills, a measure on taxes and transportation that was approved by the GOP-controlled chamber on a party-line vote. ... Among the more hotly debated parts of the plan are provisions that would limit

early voting, which has helped Democrats, and restrict the ability of Gov.-elect Tony Evers (D) to make appointments. ... Opponents of the plan, meanwhile, continued to demonstrate at the State Capitol, including at a Christmas-tree lighting presided over by Gov. Scott Walker (R).” **Just after midnight, Republicans [approved](#) a plan to lock in place a Medicaid work requirement, which Evers said he intended to roll back.**

**-- Incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) suggested Democrats may refuse to seat a North Carolina Republican whose election is being investigated for possible fraud. [Mike DeBonis reports](#):** “[Hoyer] made the comments to reporters Tuesday as North Carolina election officials investigate whether an operative working on behalf of Republican candidate Mark Harris illegally collected incomplete ballots from voters. Hoyer’s comments, and the increasing criticism from other national Democrats, represent a new threat to Harris’s candidacy — suggesting that even if his apparent narrow victory is ultimately certified by the state, Harris could be subject to a months-long process in the House to determine whether he is ultimately sworn in.”

**-- A Trump-appointed federal prosecutor who has repeatedly prosecuted noncitizens for voting now has jurisdiction over the North Carolina case. [HuffPost’s Sam Levine and Ryan J. Reilly report](#):** “[U.S.

Attorney Robert] Higdon's office also issued a broad subpoena request earlier this year for millions of voter registration applications and absentee ballots, which the North Carolina Board of Elections voted to quash. Under scrutiny, Higdon's office delayed the subpoenas until after November's election. Election officials are now investigating apparent irregularities with absentee ballots in the midterm race."

**-- Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) is launching a new political action committee to recruit Republican women to run for Congress. [John Wagner reports](#):**

"Stefanik, who served for two years as the first female head of recruitment at the National Republican Congressional Committee, announced the formation of her PAC, which she said will field female candidates in GOP primaries. That is at odds with the practices of the NRCC, which does not get involved in contests among Republicans. Rep. Tom Emmer (Minn.), the newly elected NRCC chairman, made that point in a story in Roll Call, telling the publication 'if that's what Elise wants to do, then that's her call, her right.' 'But,' he added, 'I think that's a mistake.' Stefanik fired back Tuesday on Twitter, sharing the Roll Call story and highlighting Emmer's quote. 'NEWSFLASH,' she wrote. 'I wasn't asking for permission.' " ([Read more](#) from Power Up's Jackie Alemany this morning.)



Watch Beto O'Rourke's full concession speech

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Scoop: Obama met with Beto O'Rourke as the former Democratic Senate candidate weighs a presidential bid.** [Matt Viser reports](#): "The meeting, which was held Nov. 16 at the former president's offices in Foggy Bottom, came as former Obama aides have encouraged the Democratic House member to run, seeing him as capable of the same kind of inspirational

campaign that caught fire in the 2008 presidential election. The meeting was the first sign of Obama getting personally involved in conversations with O'Rourke ... TMZ, the Hollywood-based entertainment website, is now trailing O'Rourke; he is being swamped by calls from Democratic operatives eager to work for him, and other campaigns-in-the-making are eyeing his moves closely for any signs of his intentions. ...

**“O'Rourke was not among the slate of candidates that Obama endorsed during the midterm elections, but that came in part at O'Rourke's request.** Obama offered several times to help O'Rourke's campaign, including to come to Texas for a rally or to record robo-calls offering his endorsement. ... Obama even recorded a video that O'Rourke's campaign never utilized; it remained a subject of internal debate. O'Rourke ... hasn't forgotten his 2012 congressional campaign, when Obama — as well as another former president, Bill Clinton — endorsed his opponent, eight-term Democratic congressman Silvestre Reyes.”

**“Some of his closest friends ... expect (Beto) to run, with one of them putting 60-40 odds on his getting into the race.** O'Rourke has enlisted his longtime aide, David Wyson, to handle the barrage of incoming calls. But he has not made any commitments and has largely ignored requests coming from groups in the early-voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire eager to have him

visit.”

**-- Former Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick is expected to announce he will not pursue a 2020 run. [Politico's Natasha Korecki, Kyle Cheney and Stephanie Murray report](#):** “Patrick informed staff and advisers of his decision (yesterday), the sources say, with an announcement to come as soon as this week. A close ally of [Obama], the Democrat rejoined the private sector at Bain Capital after serving two terms as Massachusetts's governor. But he ramped up his political activity this fall in advance of a possible presidential bid, traveling to a handful of races across the country.”

**-- Stormy Daniels's attorney Michael Avenatti took himself out of the running for 2020. [John Wagner reports](#):** “ ‘I do not make this decision lightly — I make it out of respect for my family. But for their concerns, I would run,’ Avenatti said in a statement in which he did not detail the concerns. Avenatti said he would continue to represent Daniels ‘and others against Donald Trump and his cronies and will not rest until Trump is removed from office, and our republic and its values are restored.’ ”

**-- The DNC is finalizing a 2020 primary debate schedule that will allow lesser-known candidates to share a stage with front-runners. [Michael Scherer reports](#):** “Chairman Tom Perez and his team have been meeting for months with 2016 campaign advisers and



other stakeholders to find a way to improve the debate process, while accommodating the unusually large class of credible potential candidates, which could number more than 20 by spring. Perez has made clear to his staff that he would like the field to be presented in a way that initially mixes top-tier candidates with lesser-known ones.”

**-- Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, another potential 2020 candidate who just finished his term as chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, is trying to block Joe Manchin from becoming the top Democrat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee over the West Virginia senator's views on climate change. [The Guardian's Ben Jacobs reports](#):** “In an email sent out to supporters, Inslee insists: ‘Senate Democrats must not allow Joe Manchin to become the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I need your help to stop this.’ While the Washington Democrat offers some praise for Manchin ... he adds: ‘But on climate, he’s simply wrong.’ ...The effort shows Inslee making an effort to appeal to [progressives] as a potential ‘climate candidate’ if he chooses to run in 2020.”



Reporters swarm Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney at the White House. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

## **THE DOMESTIC AGENDA:**

**-- Mick Mulvaney has overseen a drastic curtailment of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's mission and oversight. [Robert O'Harrow Jr., Shawn Boburg and Renae Merle have an in-depth look at Mulvaney's tenure](#):** "One year after Mulvaney's arrival, he and his political aides have constrained the agency from

within, achieving what conservatives on Capitol Hill had for years been unable to do, according to agency data and interviews with career officials. Publicly announced enforcement actions by the bureau have dropped about 75 percent from average in recent years, while consumer complaints have risen to new highs, according to a Washington Post analysis of bureau data. Over the past year, the agency's workforce has dropped by at least 129 employees amid the largest exodus since its creation in 2010, agency data shows.

“Created by Congress to protect Americans from financial abuses, the bureau under Mulvaney has adopted the role of promoting ‘free markets’ and guarding the rights of banks and financial firms as well as those of consumers, according to statements by Mulvaney and bureau documents. ... The Senate this week is expected to confirm a new agency director, Kathy Kraninger, an associate director at the Office of Management and Budget, where Mulvaney splits his time as director. But Democrats have pledged to examine Mulvaney's tenure at the consumer protection bureau after they take control of the House in January.”

**-- The future of a multimillion-dollar contract to research new HIV treatments has been thrown into question over the Trump administration's opposition to the lab's use of fetal tissue. [Amy Goldstein reports](#):**  
“The turmoil over the National Institutes of Health contract

with the University of California at San Francisco is part of a building battle between conservatives opposed to research using fetal tissue and scientists who say the material is vital to developing new therapies for diseases from AIDS to Parkinson's. ... Last week, an NIH contracting official told the principal investigator at UCSF that the government was ending the seven-year contract midstream and that the decision was coming from the 'highest levels,' according to a virologist familiar with the events. Five days later, the university received a letter from the AIDS division of NIH's National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases saying the government would continue the contract for 90 days rather than the expected year-long renewal, with no forecast of its prospects after that."

**-- A government task force recommended ways to make the Postal Service more profitable, including reconsidering how e-commerce packages are priced.**

[Rachel Siegel reports](#): "But it did not go so far as to say the financially strapped Postal Service is losing money to Amazon, a company which contracts services from the Postal Service and that has consistently drawn Trump's ire. Even though the 70-page report does not specifically cite its contract with Amazon, it does recommend a reevaluation of the pricing for e-commerce packages and other non-essential mail shipped by companies such as Amazon." (Amazon.com chief executive Jeff Bezos also owns The Post.)

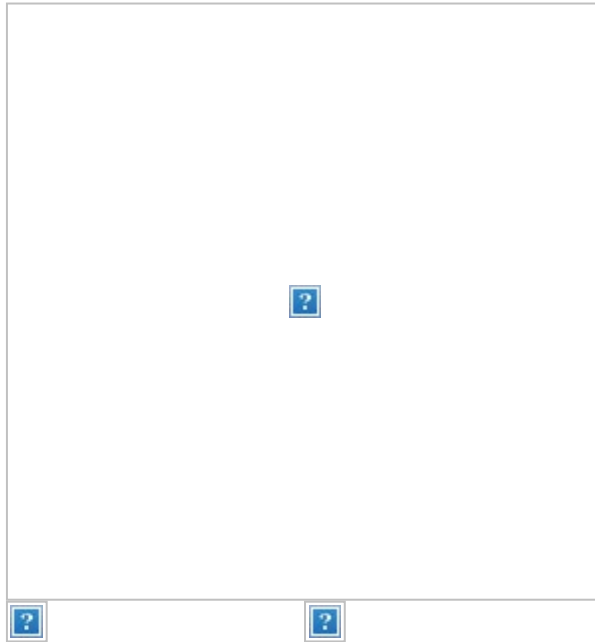
**-- Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) voiced confidence the chamber's criminal justice bill would pass "overwhelmingly" if Mitch McConnell allowed a vote on it.** [John Wagner reports](#): "Grassley said that he has met a target for support set by McConnell and that senators should take up the legislation by the end of the year, arguing that Republicans could even delay the confirmation of some judicial nominees to create more time. ... Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) ... said support among the 49-member Democratic caucus is 'solid,' though he stopped short of guaranteeing that every Democrat would vote for the bill. Grassley argued that waiting until next year would hurt the chances of passing the bill."

**-- A native-born U.S. citizen was held for weeks for potential deportation to Jamaica.** [Isaac Stanley-Becker reports](#): "[Peter Sean Brown] had been accused of a probation violation after testing positive for marijuana. But instead of returning home with a court date, or passing a few days in custody, Brown would spend weeks behind bars, battling his way through a labyrinthine immigration nightmare made all the more baffling by his citizenship."

**-- Google CEO Sundar Pichai's congressional testimony has been rescheduled for Dec. 11 because of George H.W. Bush's funeral.** The House Judiciary Committee is expected to question Pichai on

Republican allegations the search engine is unfairly biased against conservatives. ([Tony Romm](#))

## **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**



Trump touted his gentleman's agreement with Xi on Twitter this morning after the markets tanked yesterday:



The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee continued to criticize Trump for his tweets about Michael Cohen and Roger Stone:



Trump offered a message of "I told you so" to a European ally:





Meanwhile, BuzzFeed News's deputy director of breaking news mocked Trump's description of himself as a "Tariff Man":



The president and the first lady met a pair of their predecessors at the Blair House:



One of Bush 41's sons thanked Bob Dole after he stood from his wheelchair to salute the casket of his former political rival:



From a New York Times reporter:



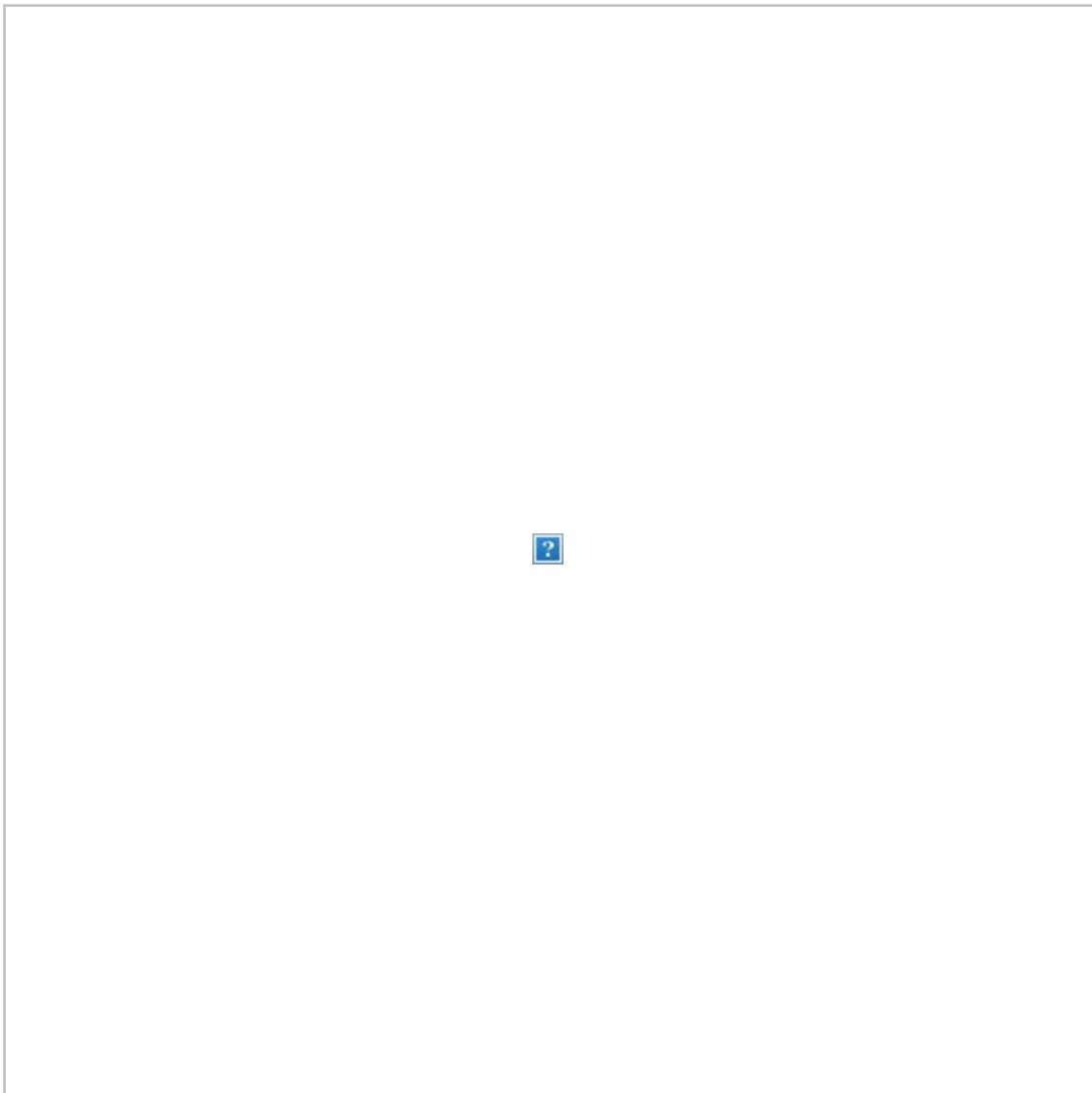
From an NBC News host:



Republican officials and lawmakers are at odds over the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, per a CNN reporter:



Rudy Giuliani falsely blamed Twitter after a digital marketing director in Atlanta [purchased](#) an Internet domain to incorporate an anti-Trump message into Giuliani's tweet about the G-20 summit:



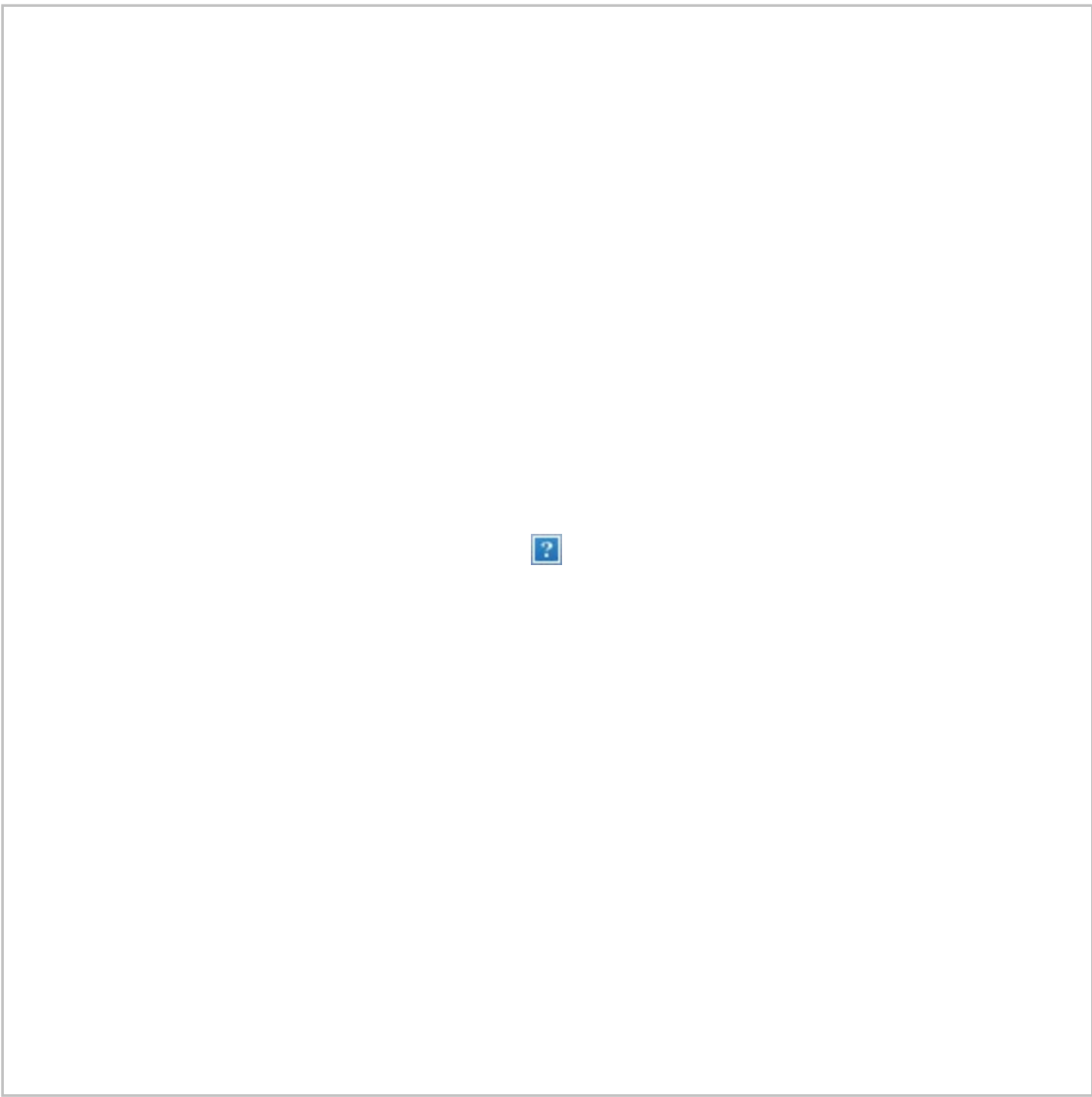
The Pentagon had a rather misleading typo in a statement on the troop deployment at the border, per a BuzzFeed News reporter:

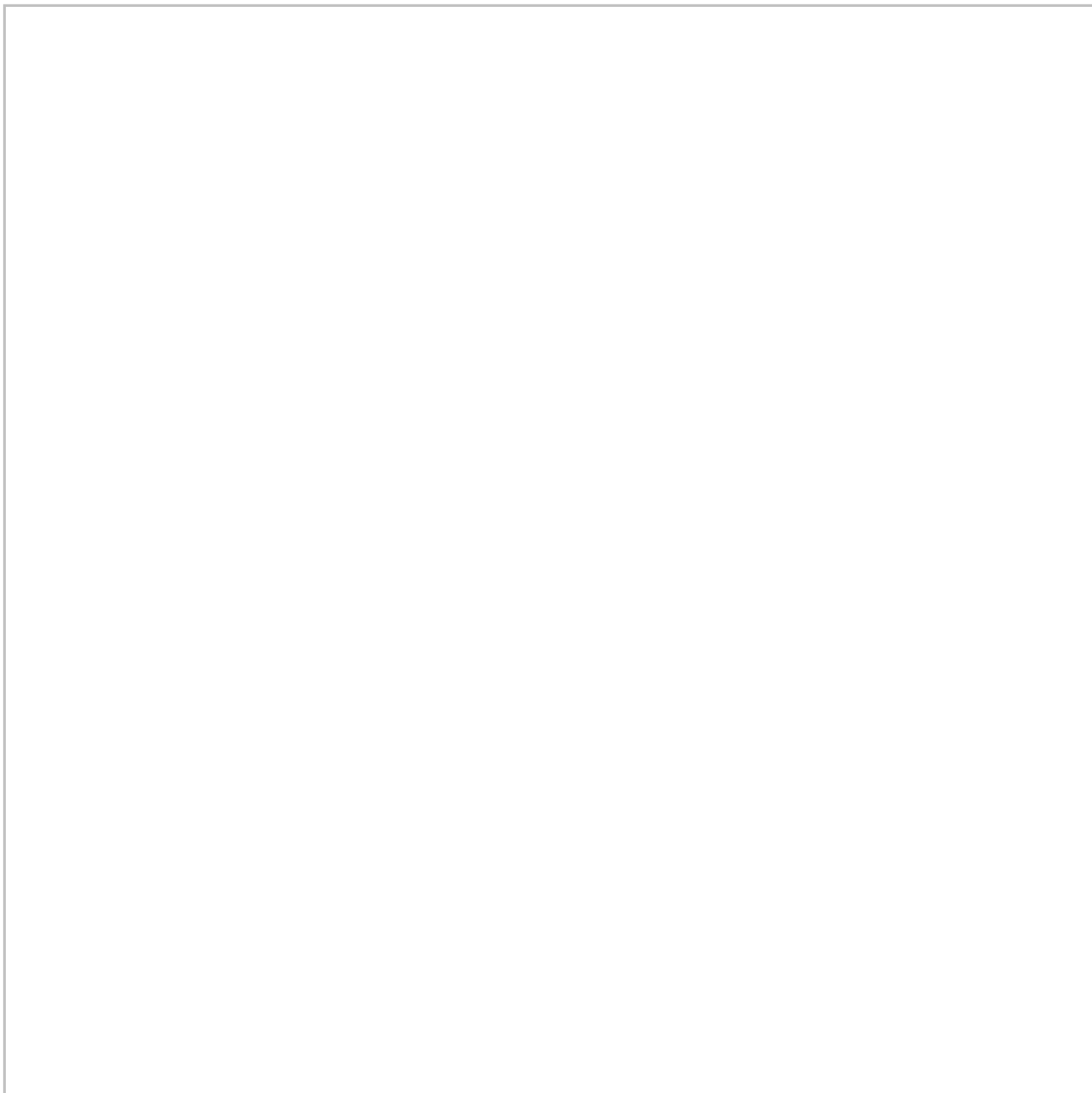




(Defense officials quickly issued a correction.)

Wisconsin's Democratic senator spoke out against recent moves by the state legislature to limit the power of the incoming Democratic governor:





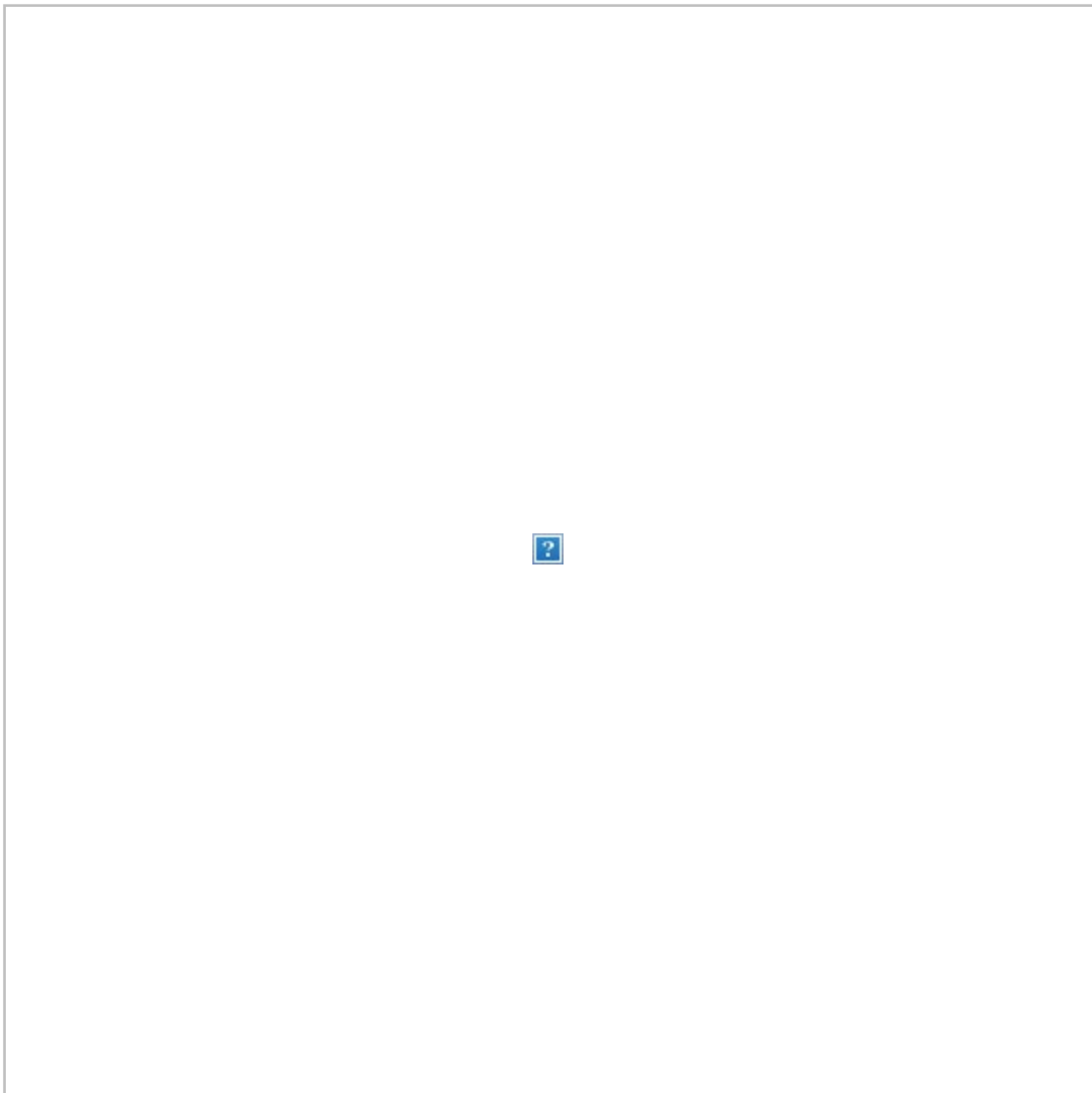
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) continues to gain more support for her "Green New Deal":



A House Democrat attacked Republican accusations of voter fraud as the investigation into North Carolina's disputed congressional race continues:



But a writer for The Fix noted this important distinction about the North Carolina race:



And this tweet from Barack Obama was the second-most liked tweet of 2018, according to Twitter's newly released data:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York Times, “ [‘Transactional’ Sex and a Secret Resignation Letter: Takeaways From a Report on Les Moonves](#),” by Rachel Abrams and David Enrich: “The outside lawyers were told by multiple people that CBS had an employee ‘who was ‘on call’ to perform oral sex’ on Mr. Moonves. According to the draft report: ‘A number of employees were aware of this and believed that the woman was protected from discipline or termination as a

result of it.’ ... The report found that, in addition to consensual relationships and affairs, ‘Moonves received oral sex from at least 4 CBS employees under circumstances that sound transactional and improper to the extent that there was no hint of any relationship, romance, or reciprocity.’”

-- The Atlantic, “[It's Almost Impossible to Be a Mom in Television News](#),” by Julianna Goldman: “According to a report by the Women’s Media Center, television viewers are less likely to see women reporting the news today than just a few years ago. At the Big Three networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—combined, men were responsible for reporting 75 percent of the evening news broadcasts over three months in 2016, while women were responsible for reporting only 25 percent—a drop from 32 percent two years earlier. What could be contributing to this? Much has been written about anti-mom bias and the so-called motherhood penalty in industries from law to finance to tech. ... TV news is that and then some for working moms.”

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**“ ‘Damn Right, I’m a White Nationalist’ Declares Texas GOP Platform Committee**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**“Sanders campaign drops \$300k on private jet travel,” from [VT Digger](#):**



**Member,” from the Texas Observer:** “At the Texas Republican Party’s 2018 convention, Ray Myers was a part of a select group of activists charged with crafting the platform for the biggest and most influential state party in the country. Myers is also a white nationalist, a fact that he declared last week. ‘Damn Right, I’m a WHITE NATIONALIST and very Proud of it,’ Myers wrote in a Facebook post last Tuesday. Myers is a 74-year-old activist who has been involved in GOP politics for decades. But ‘the pivotal political moment came

“Sen. Bernie Sanders 2018 re-election campaign spent almost \$300,000 on private jet service for a recent cross country tour to stump for Democrats and test the presidential waters. According to federal campaign finance reports, Friends of Bernie Sanders, the senator’s official 2018 Senate campaign committee, spent \$297,685.50 with Apollo Jets, a private charter jet service headquartered in New York. The report does not break down the number of trips or where they were taken. ... Sanders came under criticism in 2017 after his

when Obama came on the scene. I knew immediately that America was in trouble,' he said in an Empower Texans profile.”

senate campaign spent a smaller amount with Apollo Jets — \$37,568. He was ridiculed for using a luxury service while criticizing the wealthy.”

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** and the first lady will attend the funeral of Bush 41 at the Washington National Cathedral today.

The president will also attend the Army-Navy Game on Saturday in Philadelphia, [Jake Russell reports](#).

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

“I have been at probably every powerful table that you can think of, I have worked at nonprofits, I have been at foundations, I have worked in corporations, served on corporate boards, I have been at G-summits, I have sat in at the U.N.: They are not that smart.” — Michelle Obama offering advice to young women on how to avoid self-doubt. ([Newsweek](#))



## **NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington could see flurries or even snow showers today.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “A bit of energy passing through the atmosphere could produce a few flurries or snow showers during the day. Can’t totally rule out a quick dusting if a heavier snow shower comes through. Otherwise we’re mostly cloudy and cold, with morning temperatures near 30 to the mid-30s, and afternoon highs stalling in the mid-30s to near 40.”

**-- The Capitals lost to the Golden Knights 5-3.**  
([Isabelle Khurshudyan](#))

**-- The Nationals have agreed to a deal with left-handed pitcher Patrick Corbin.** [From Chelsea Janes](#): “The terms of the deal are not yet known, though Yahoo and others have reported it is worth \$140 million and does include that ever-present Nationals' specialty — deferred money. The deal fills Washington’s most glaring hole, providing a proven arm behind Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg.”

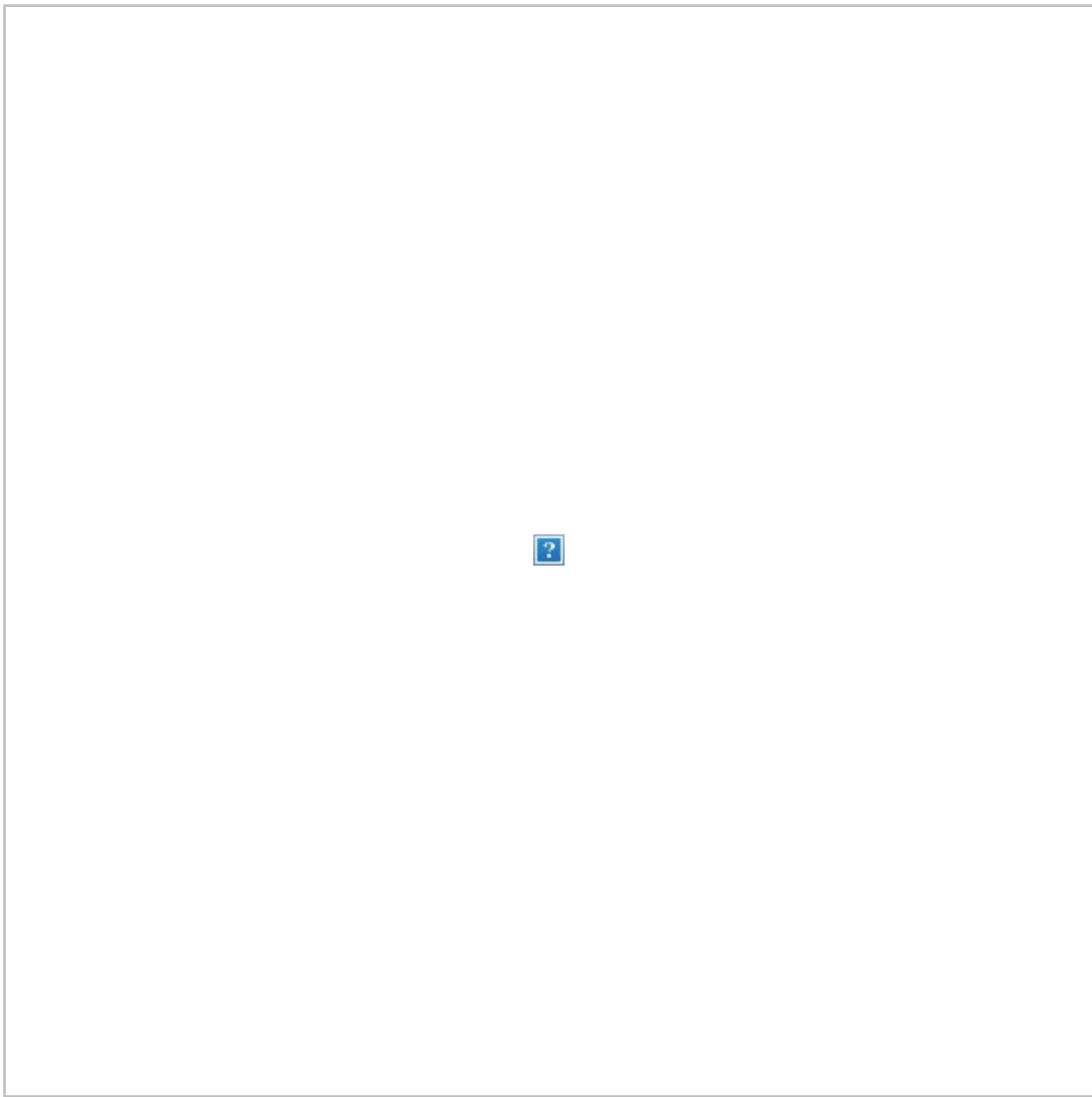
**-- The Office of Congressional Ethics found that outgoing Rep. Thomas Garrett (R-Va.) and his wife**

**had congressional staffers perform their personal errands.** [Jenna Portnoy reports](#): “The report found insufficient evidence for the claim that Garrett paid an employee out of his campaign coffers to do personal errands. ... On at least two occasions, Garrett or his wife asked a staff member to change the oil in the congressman’s car. A staffer went to Ikea and Costco with his wife, Flanna Garrett, during the workday. Staffers also frequently fed and walked the congressman’s dog, which was often present in the congressional office, and cared for the dog on their personal time.”

**-- The D.C. Council gave final approval to a bill decriminalizing Metro fare evasion.** [Faiz Siddiqui reports](#): “The measure passed amid staunch opposition from Metro and its board, which argued the transit agency loses more than \$25 million a year to fare evasion and that lessening the penalties for such an offense would only exacerbate the problem and lead to more crime. Council members and activists rejected that line of argument and said decriminalizing the act was an important step toward addressing disproportionate policing of African Americans on the transit system.”

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

This clip of Flynn chanting “lock her up” at the Republican National Convention really didn’t age well:

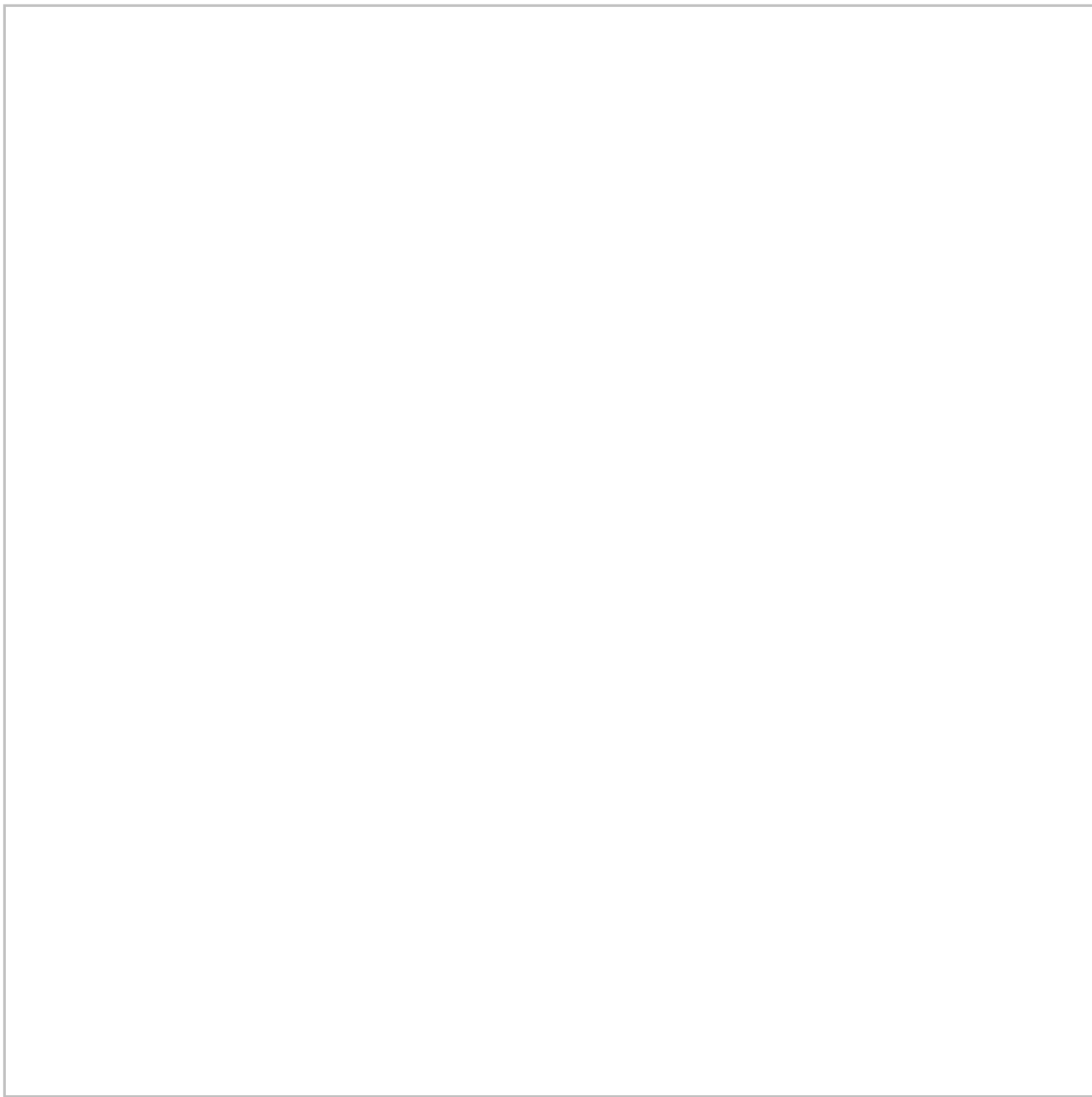


Michael Flynn leads chants of 'lock her up' at Republican Convention

Late-night hosts mocked Trump's self-description as  
"Tariff Man":

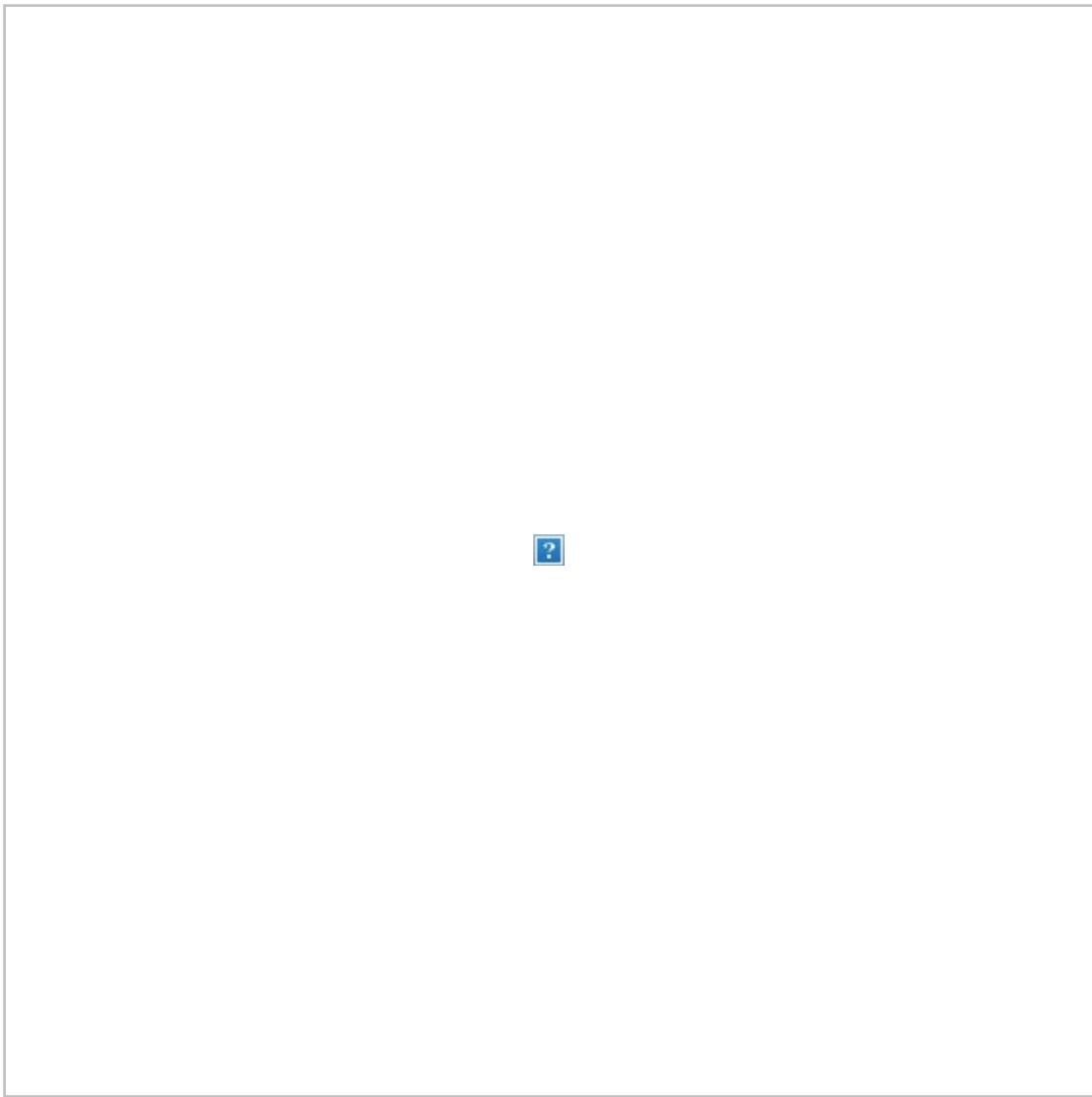


Tariff Man Is Going to be Angry About French Fries



Tariff Man May Have Spoken Too Soon

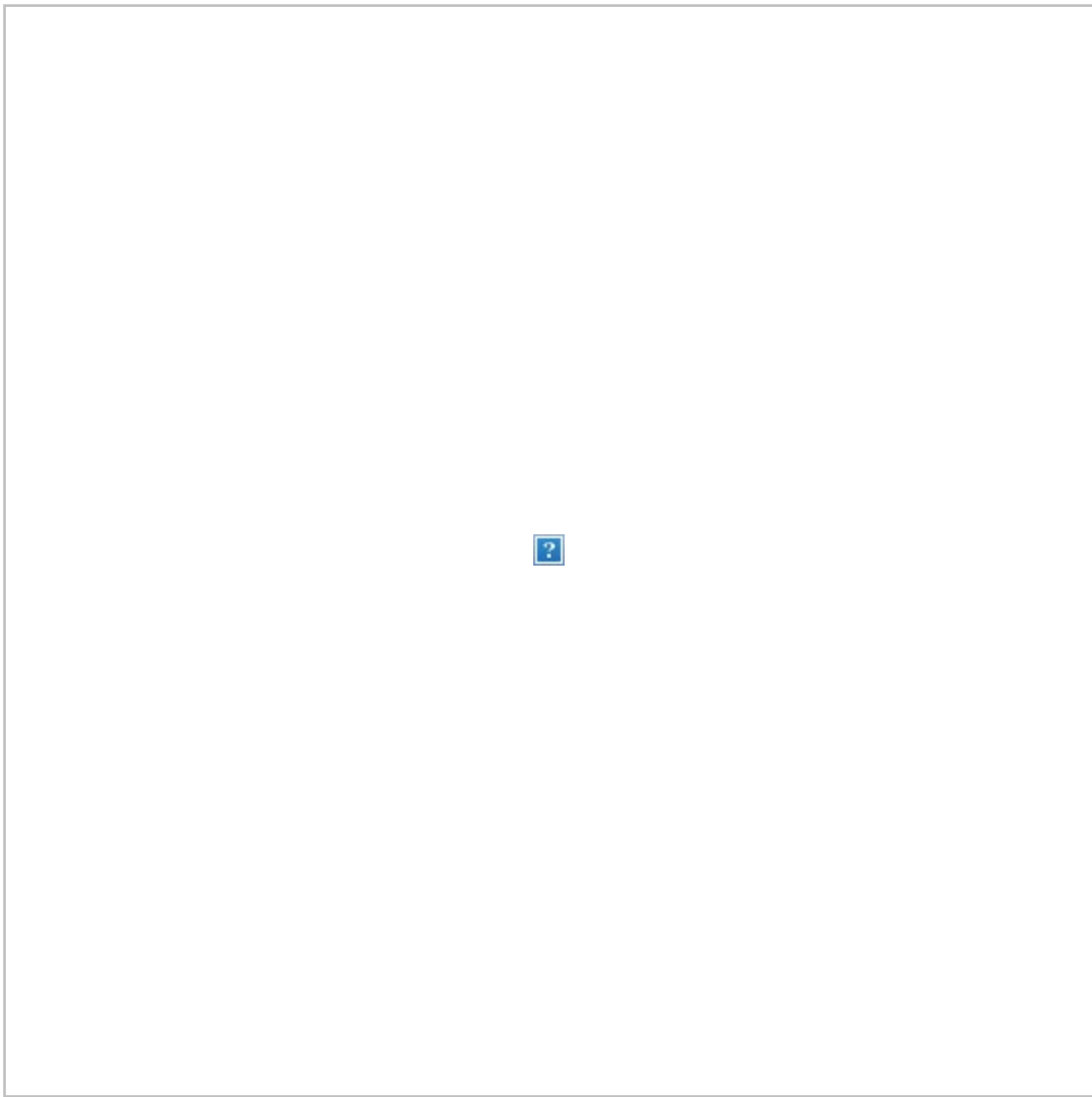
**Bush's service dog, Sully, visited his casket at the Capitol:**



Bush's service dog Sully visits his coffin at the Capitol

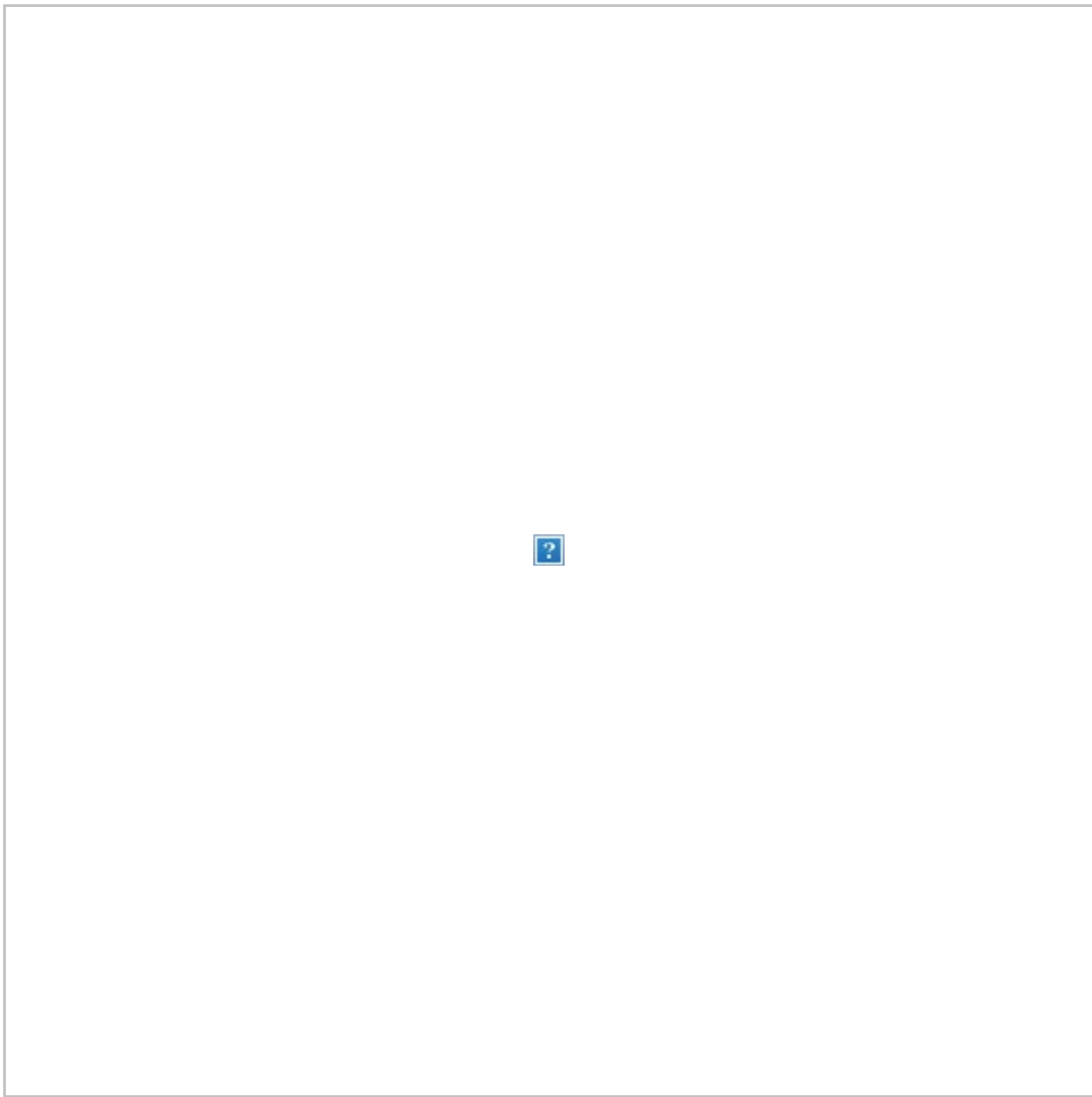
The Post talked to the owner of Bush's favorite Houston restaurant to find out how he remembered the former president, a loyal customer for more than 35 years:





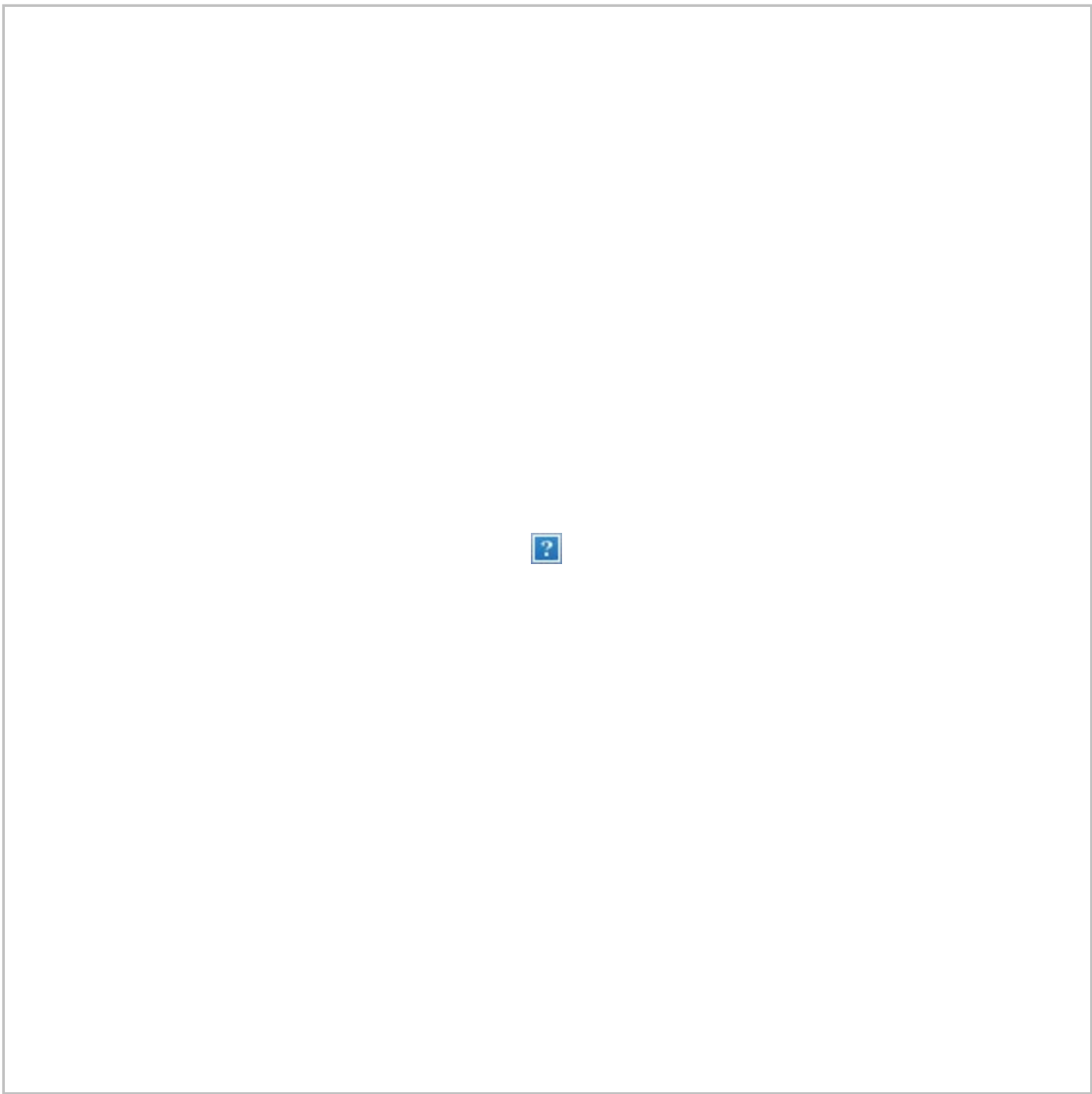
'Part of our family': How Bush's favorite Houston restaurant remembers him

The Fact Checker [outlined](#) how Trump has spun government data to present the best possible picture:



How President Trump twists government data to suit the political moment

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Polish President Andrzej Duda shook hands "Predator-style" on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference:



Schwarzenegger and Poland's Duda shake hands 'Predator-style'

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**To:** [Brenda Bailey](#)

**Subject:** The Daily 202: Four reasons that even some Trump loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff  
**Date:** Monday, December 10, 2018 9:35:07 AM

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# The Daily 202



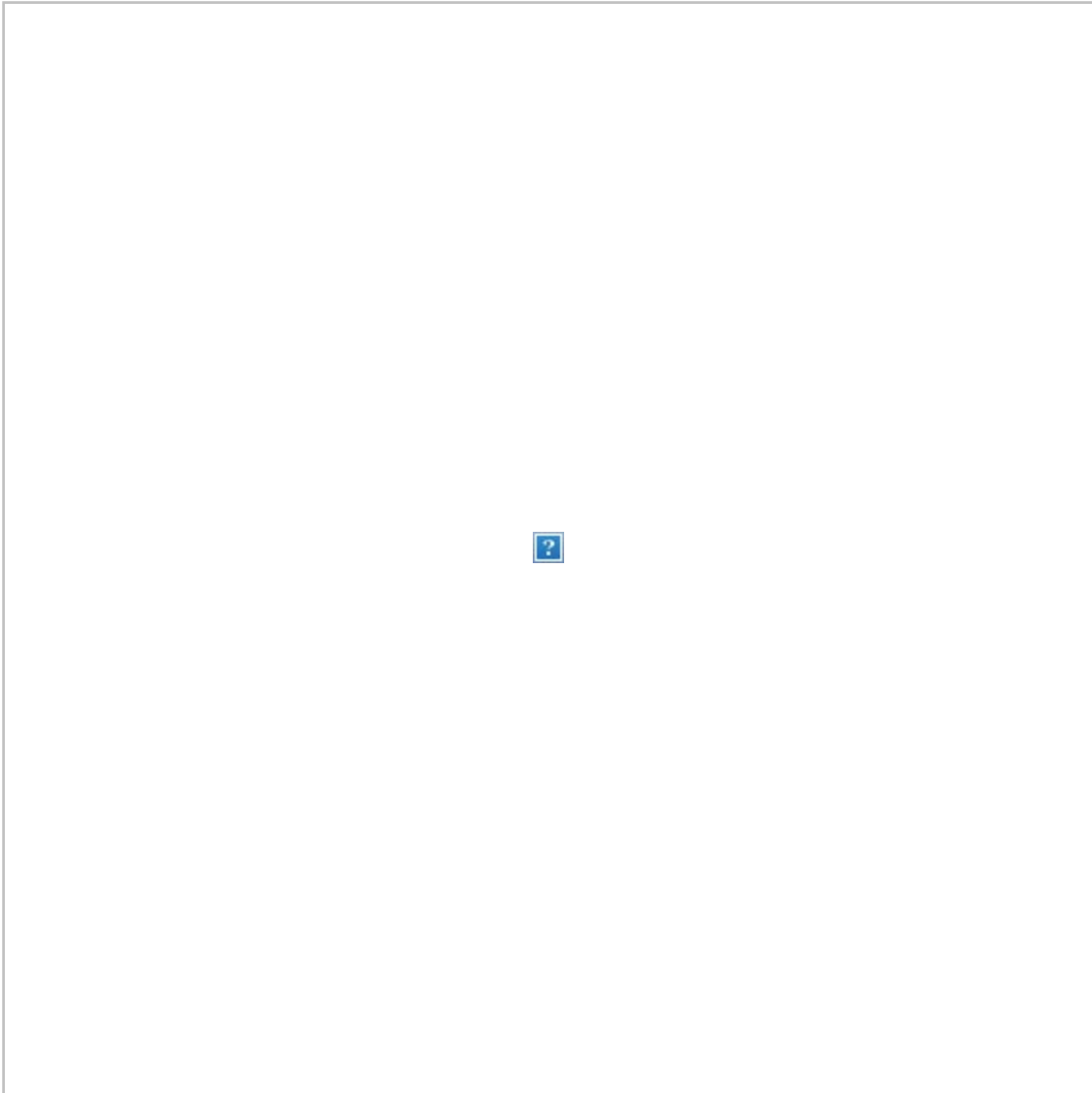
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 Listen to The Big Idea



## Four reasons that even some Trump

# loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff



A look back at John Kelly's relationship with President Trump



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** There's a tweet for everything. "3 chiefs of staff in less than 3 years of being President," Donald Trump posted in 2012. "Part of the reason why

@BarackObama can't manage to pass his agenda."

But Barack Obama never had a problem finding talented people eager to take the job, and a 36-year-old certainly never snubbed the previous president the way that Nick Ayers did on Sunday. Now, with two months left in his second year, President Trump is back at square one as he searches for a third chief of staff.

**Advisers to Trump were "stunned" that Vice President Pence's chief turned down the chance to replace John Kelly**, claiming he wanted to spend more time with his family in Georgia, Maggie Haberman reports on the front page of the [New York Times](#): "One former senior administration official called it a humiliation for Mr. Trump and his adult children, an emotion that the president tries to avoid at all costs. ... Two people close to Mr. Trump said that a news release announcing Mr. Ayers's appointment had been drafted, and that the president had wanted to announce it as soon as possible."

-- **Who now?** "Trump's new list of potential chiefs includes Office of Management and Budget Director **Mick Mulvaney** ... and Rep. **Mark Meadows** (R-N.C.), a leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus," [per The Post's Felicia Sonmez, Josh Dawsey and Damian Paletta](#). "Acting Attorney General **Matthew G. Whitaker** and Trade Representative **Robert E. Lighthizer** were

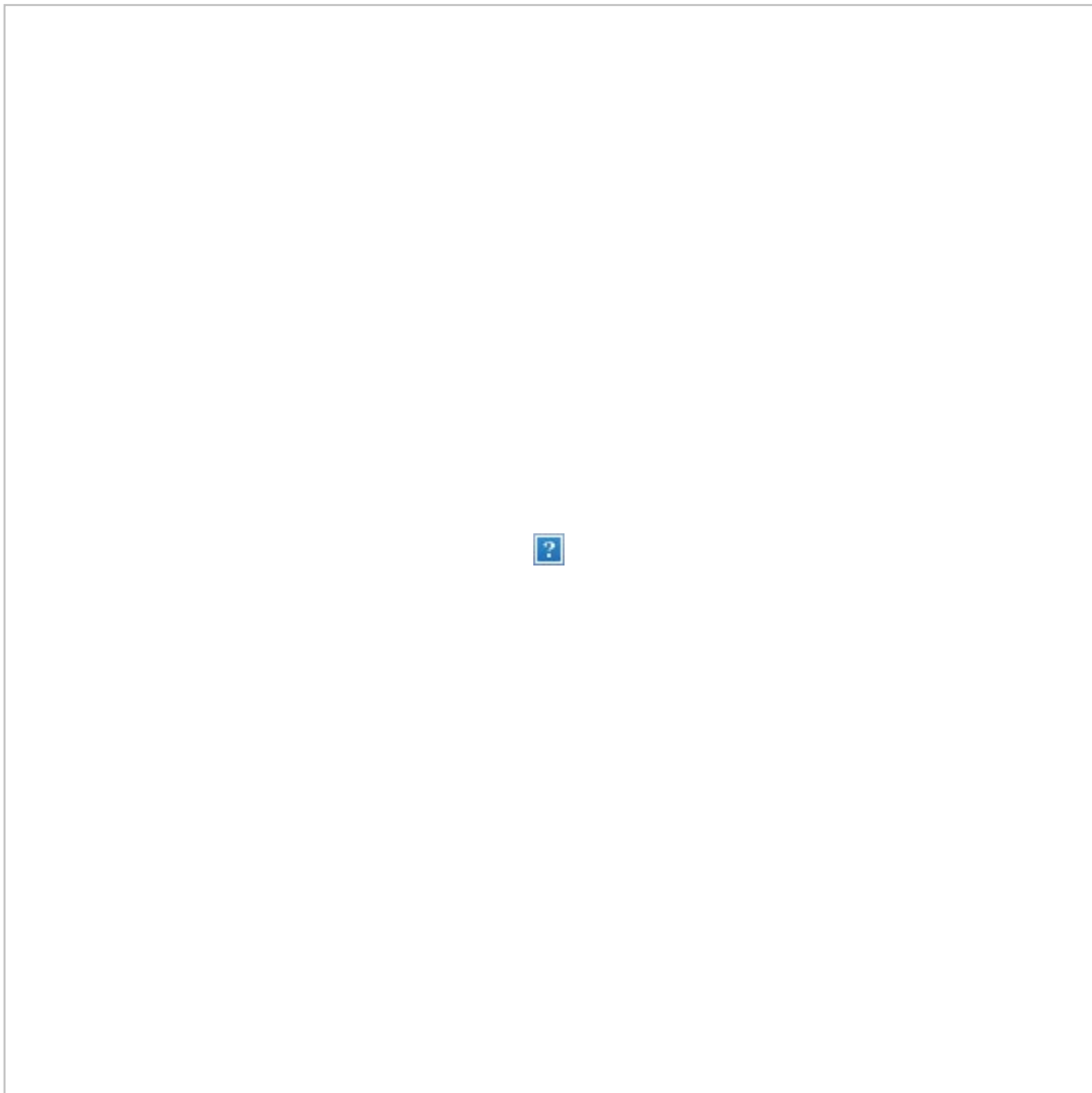
also said to be under consideration. But a senior administration official, who spoke privately and was not authorized to discuss the talks, said there was reluctance to move Lighthizer into the role [because] he is integral to negotiations with China over trade. Another senior administration official said that Mulvaney and Treasury Secretary **Steven Mnuchin** have both expressed internally that they aren't seeking the job but could change their minds if Trump pleads with them."

The [Associated Press](#) reports that Mulvaney is not interested in becoming chief of staff, citing a person close to him: "Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary. ... A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff. ... Trump's former deputy campaign manager, **David Bossie**, is also among the names being floated by some close to the White House. ... Pence's deputy chief of staff, Jarrod Agen, is expected to assume Ayers' role for the vice president."

"Former Gov. **Chris Christie** of New Jersey, who as a onetime United States attorney could help Mr. Trump in an impeachment fight, was also being mentioned," per the Times.

"In recent days, another name for chief of staff has

cropped up among Trump's advisers: **Wayne Berman**, senior managing director and head of global government affairs at the Blackstone Group," per [Politico](#). "Berman, who served as a top political aide at the Commerce Department under President George H.W. Bush, is close to Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, who remains one of Trump's closest confidants in the business world."



John Kelly, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and Nick Ayers listen as President Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting in March. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)



**-- For anyone, under any president, this is a hard job with a Herculean learning curve. But there are four unique reasons that this position is especially foreboding for ambitious apparatchiks, even Trump loyalists.**

### **1) Ivanka cannot be managed.**

Kelly clashed constantly with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the president's daughter and son-in-law. They technically reported to him, but they had a direct channel to the president and maneuvered behind the scenes to replace him as chief.

"The couple told others privately that Kelly shared damaging stories about them and had not always served the president well," [Josh, Seung Min Kim and Phil Rucker reported](#) on Saturday. "For his part, Kelly joked that the couple was 'playing government,' and he said they should never have been brought into the White House — and that the pair thought they did not have to follow the traditional rules."

It's very hard, if not impossible, to manage your boss's kids. The power dynamic will always be challenging, no matter how clearly roles and responsibilities are delineated. This is why many public companies and agencies have nepotism rules.

Ayers had carefully cultivated an alliance with Javanka, who went to bat for him with Trump, even as other senior administration officials lobbied against him directly to the president. But then there's this wrinkle: Two sources tell [CNN](#) that one reason Ayers did not take the job was because of resistance from Melania Trump. The first lady has been more assertive recently, and she recently got the deputy national security adviser fired after a conflict that seemed to stem from a dispute over seating arrangements on a flight to Africa.

Just as in any West Wing, there are other competing power centers to worry about, as well. Then there's the 2020 reelection campaign, which will have offices in New York and Northern Virginia. There are also seemingly dozens of outside friends and advisers whom Trump phones regularly for advice.

The president has a long history, going back to his time managing Atlantic City casinos, of pitting staff against each other because he thinks it means he gets better advice and prevents anyone else from becoming too powerful. Remember the epic clashes between then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in 2016?



'Undisciplined, challenging individual': Tillerson opens up on working with Trump

## **2) Trump will not be managed.**

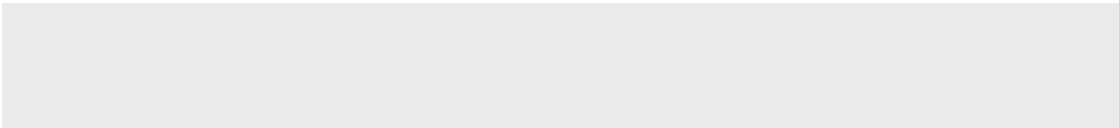
A chief of staff must manage both down and up, but the 72-year-old in the Oval Office seems pretty set in his habits. Trump also wants it both ways. He wants his White House to run “like a fine-tuned machine,” as he’s said it does, but – ever the showman – he also likes the reality TV vibe, where people are constantly left wondering where they stand and if they’ll get written off in

the next episode.

To put it mildly, Trump doesn't sweat the small stuff. Former secretary of state Rex Tillerson [described](#) some of his frustrations with advising an "undisciplined" president during an event in Houston last Thursday night. "What was challenging for me coming from the disciplined, highly process-oriented ExxonMobil corporation," Tillerson said, was "to go to work for a man who is pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things, but rather just kind of says, 'This is what I believe.' ... So often the president would say, 'Here's what I want to do, and here's how I want to do it' and I would have to say to him, 'Mr. President, I understand what you want to do, but you can't do it that way. It violates the law.' "

The president responded hours later by saying that he fired Tillerson because he "didn't have the mental capacity needed": "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell."

As far as the president is concerned, nothing is ever his fault. The guy in the adjacent office is a natural scapegoat, maybe even more so than whoever is at Foggy Bottom.





CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

## How to finance a cleaner planet

In 2018, Bank of America issued its fourth and largest green bond for \$2.25 billion. Learn more about this innovative way of financing a more sustainable future.





President Trump speaks on the phone in the Oval Office, joined by then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, Vice President Pence, senior adviser Steve Bannon, Communications Director Sean Spicer and national security adviser Michael Flynn. Only Pence, whose job is protected by the Constitution, remains. (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

**3) With so many storm clouds on the horizon, the odds are good that the next chief will need to retain his own lawyers.**

House Democrats get their gavels, and subpoena power, in just three weeks. Whoever gets this job will almost

certainly need to hire a personal attorney at some point with the White House under so much scrutiny from so many quarters, even if they do nothing wrong. [CNN](#) reported last week, for example, that Kelly responded to questions from special counsel Bob Mueller's team in recent months after initially resisting an interview.

No one but Trump fully knows how great his legal exposure might be on *L'Affaire Russe*. The president recently [defended](#) his efforts to make business deals with Russians tied to the Kremlin during the campaign – which he falsely, vigorously and repeatedly denied at the time – as “very legal & very cool.”

“The White House is adopting what one official termed a ‘shrugged shoulders’ strategy for the Mueller findings, calculating that most GOP base voters will believe whatever the president tells them to believe,” [Bob Costa and Rucker reported](#) in Sunday's paper. “But some allies fret that the president's coalition could crack apart under the growing pressure. Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump strategist who helped him navigate the most arduous phase of his 2016 campaign, predicted 2019 would be a year of ‘siege warfare’ and cast the president's inner circle as naively optimistic and unsophisticated. ... Rather than building a war room to manage the intersecting crises as past administrations have done, the Trump White House is understaffed, stuck in a bunker mentality and largely resigned to a plan to

wing it. Political and communications operatives are mostly taking their cues from the president and letting him drive the message with his spontaneous broadsides.”

Then there’s the specter of impeachment proceedings. Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), who will chair the House Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, used the I-word on the Sunday shows. Discussing the campaign finance violations laid out in the Friday court filings about longtime Trump consigliere Michael Cohen, Nadler told CNN’s Jake Tapper: “They would be impeachable offenses. Whether they’re important enough to justify an impeachment is a different question. But certainly, they’re impeachable offenses, because, even though they were committed before the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office.”

Don’t forget the economy. Some experts believe we’re headed for a slowdown, maybe even a [recession](#). The stock market has recently wiped out its 2018 gains, and investors are [no longer buying](#) on the dip the way they had been. A handshake agreement has led to a fragile détente in the trade war with China, but it could escalate again quickly. The Federal Reserve raising interest rates has drawn Trump’s ire, and the stimulus from last year’s tax cuts is running out.

Ayers reportedly plans to lead the pro-Trump super PAC



for 2020, which walls him off from some of the aforementioned drama. “Another factor,” per Haberman: “His ascension to the top West Wing job would have meant newfound scrutiny of his personal finances — last year he reported a net worth of \$12.2 million to \$54.8 million, a sizable sum for a political operative in his 30s who has amassed his own fortune. He accumulated his wealth partly through a web of political and consulting companies in which he has held ownership stakes.”



President Trump steps off Air Force One on July 28, 2017, after firing Reince Priebus via tweet. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

#### **4) The risk of public humiliation is high.**

Few who have gone into the administration at a senior level have emerged stronger from the experience. That's not how it usually works. Typically a top White House job ensures a lifetime of lucrative opportunities. Some ex-Trumpers have struggled to get good jobs on the outside.

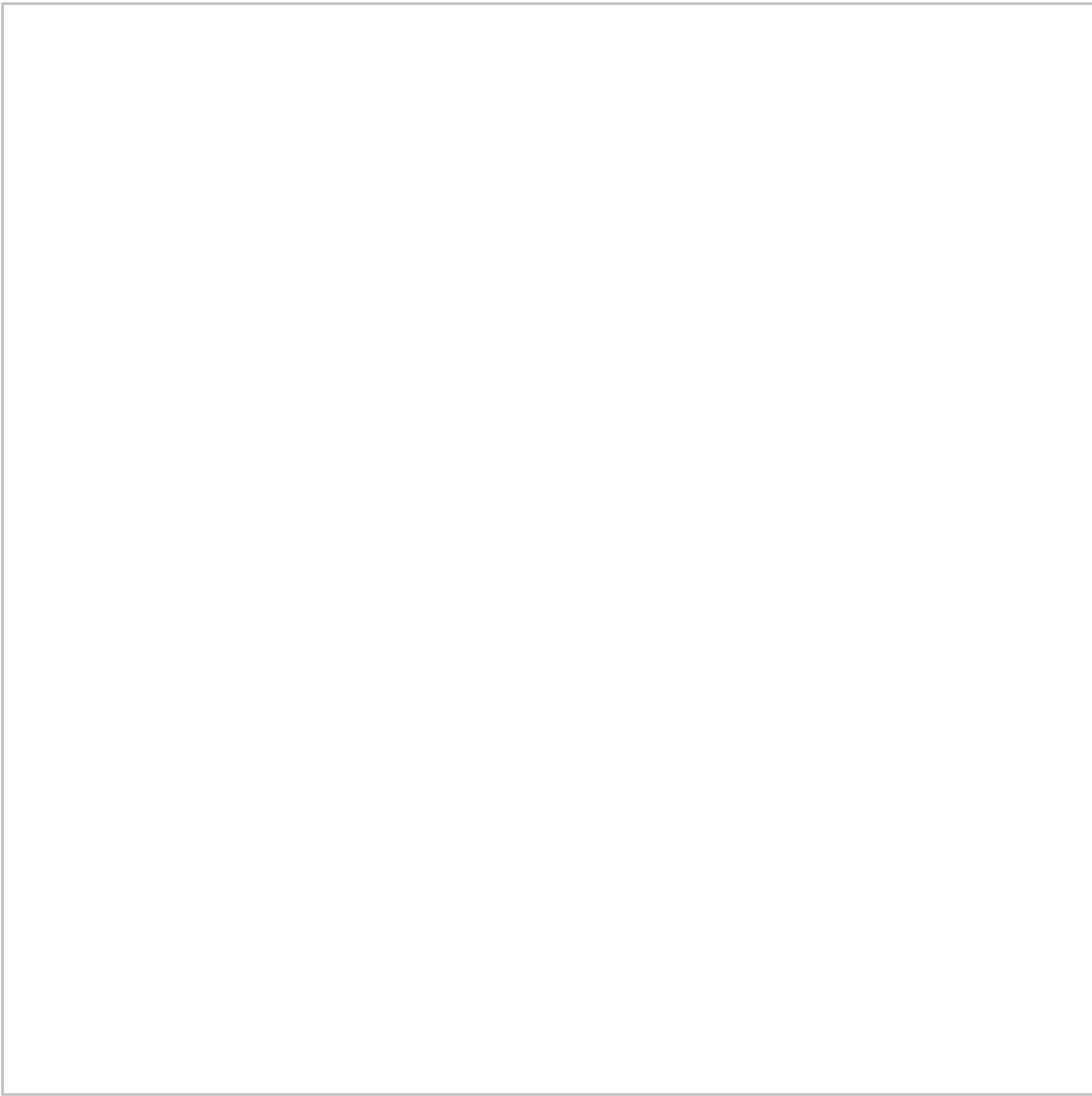
Ayers wanted to hold the chief job for only a few months and then transition out, but the president wanted him to be available through 2020. One reason he reportedly wanted to be a short-timer is to avoid months of speculative stories about whether he was on the verge of being pushed out – indignities that both of Trump's chiefs suffered through.

Trump unceremoniously ousted his first chief of staff Reince Priebus, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, on a rainy Friday night in July 2017. After Air Force One touched down at Andrews Air Force base, Priebus was sitting in a Suburban with senior policy adviser Stephen Miller and social media director Dan Scavino. When Trump tweeted that Kelly would replace him, Miller and Scavino hopped out of the vehicle. Priebus was left alone, and his Suburban [peeled away](#) from the motorcade – which continued onto the White House without him.

Priebus later debriefed Chris Whipple, the author of “The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency,” on the conflict and disarray in the White House. “Take everything you’ve heard and multiply it by 50,” Priebus told him for a piece that ran [in Vanity Fair](#).

“People mistake me for a laid-back guy from the Midwest,” he continued. “I’m much more aggressive, and much more of a knife fighter. Playing the inside game is what I do.”

But the knife fighter from Kenosha couldn’t avoid being stabbed in the back by his colleagues.



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Minerva Cisneros was killed by her partner, Arturo Sigala-Villavicencio, 28, on Christmas in 2015. (Ilana Panich-Linsman for The Washington Post)

## GET SMART FAST:

1. **Nearly half of women murdered over the past decade were killed by an intimate partner,** according to a Washington Post analysis. More than one-third of all men who killed an intimate partner were known to be a threat *before* the murder. ([Katie Zezima, Deanna Paul, Steven Rich, Julie Tate and](#)

[Jennifer Jenkins](#))

2. **An antitrust lawsuit alleging price-fixing in the generic-drug industry has expanded into an investigation of at least 16 companies and 300 drugs.** A federal prosecutor leading the probe described the industry as “most likely the largest cartel in the history of the United States.”  
([Christopher Rowland](#))
3. **Former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn was indicted after allegations of financial wrongdoing.** Japanese prosecutors said that, over four years, Ghosn underreported his income by 50 percent. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
4. **A major winter storm caused power outages and flight cancellations in the Southeast.** States of emergency were declared in Virginia and North Carolina as nearly half a million people were left without power and the region's schools [announced](#) closures. ([Luz Lazo](#))
5. **Authorities are investigating a string of arson attacks targeting the worship centers of Jehovah's Witnesses.** No motive has been uncovered for the attacks, which have already destroyed two of the pacifist religion's worship centers. ([Cleve R. Wootson Jr.](#))

6. **Research shows 2018 has been the worst on record for gun violence in schools.** According to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 94 school shootings occurred this year — a 60-percent increase from the previous high of 59 set in 2006. ([the Guardian](#))
7. **The first U.S. teachers strike against a charter school operator came to a close in Chicago.** More than 500 teachers will return to work today after reaching an agreement with Acero schools on pay raises and the school calendar. ([Associated Press](#))
8. **NPR's reliance on temporary workers has prompted complaints of exploitation.** NPR's union said between 20 and 22 percent of the public broadcaster's union-covered newsroom are temp workers, making it an outlier among broadcast media organizations. ([Paul Farhi](#))
9. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a holiday-themed reminder not to eat raw cookie dough.** The agency warned that flour is a “raw agricultural product” and can contain bacteria linked to E. coli. ([Newsweek](#))



President Trump speaks with California officials as they view damage from the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

## **THE PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES:**

**-- The Trump administration opposed a move to endorse a dire report on climate change at a United Nations conference in Poland. [David Nakamura and Darryl Fears report](#): “Arguments erupted Saturday night before a United Nations working group focused on science and technology, where **the United States****



**teamed with Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait** to challenge language that would have welcomed the findings of the landmark report, which said that the world has barely 10 years to cut carbon emissions by nearly half to avoid catastrophic warming. ‘There was going to be an agreement to welcome the . . . report,’ said Jake Schmidt, the managing director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s international program, who is in Poland. ‘The U.S. wanted to ‘note’ it, which is saying in essence that we know it’s out there but we have no comment.’”

**-- Bowing to pressure from antiabortion groups, the Trump administration halted a government-run study using fetal tissue to try to find a cure for HIV. [Amy Goldstein and Lenny Bernstein report](#):** “A senior scientist at a National Institutes of Health laboratory in Montana told colleagues that the Health and Human Services Department ‘has directed me to discontinue procuring fetal tissue’ from a firm that is the only available source, according to an email he sent to a collaborator in late September. **‘This effectively stops all of our research to discover a cure for HIV,’ the researcher wrote.** The research disruptions might extend to a handful of other labs using fetal tissue, all of which are part of NIH ... **The shutdown of the HIV research at the federal lab in Montana ... was never disclosed publicly by government officials, who have forbidden affected researchers from discussing what happened.**”

**-- Trump's trade war, as well as developments in the Russia investigation, is creating market volatility.**

[From the New York Times's Matt Phillips](#): "The trade war has already taken a toll on large chunks of the global economy. China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, is growing at its slowest rate in nearly a decade. The export-driven economies of Japan and Germany — the third and fourth biggest economies in the world, respectively — both contracted in the third quarter. The United States has so far been an outlier. ... But even in the United States, there are emerging pockets of weakness, particularly in parts of the economy that are sensitive to rising borrowing costs."

**-- The possibility of a partial government shutdown next week still looms. [The New York Times's Julie](#)**

[Hirschfeld Davis and Emily Cochrane report](#): "The deepest impasse — and the one with the greatest potential to prompt a year-end breakdown — is over Mr. Trump's demand for \$5 billion for a wall on the United States' southern border. ... Mr. Trump is set to host [Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi] at the White House on Tuesday for a meeting that will test the new dynamic between a president weakened by midterm election losses and empowered Democrats working to define their party for the era of divided government. ... Beyond the wall fight and the bare-minimum endeavor of keeping the government fully open, a perennial year-end appetite for

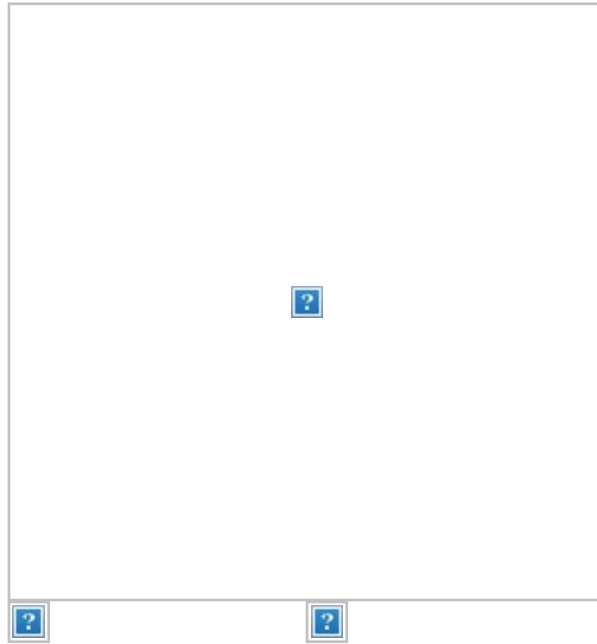
legislating has taken hold on Capitol Hill.”

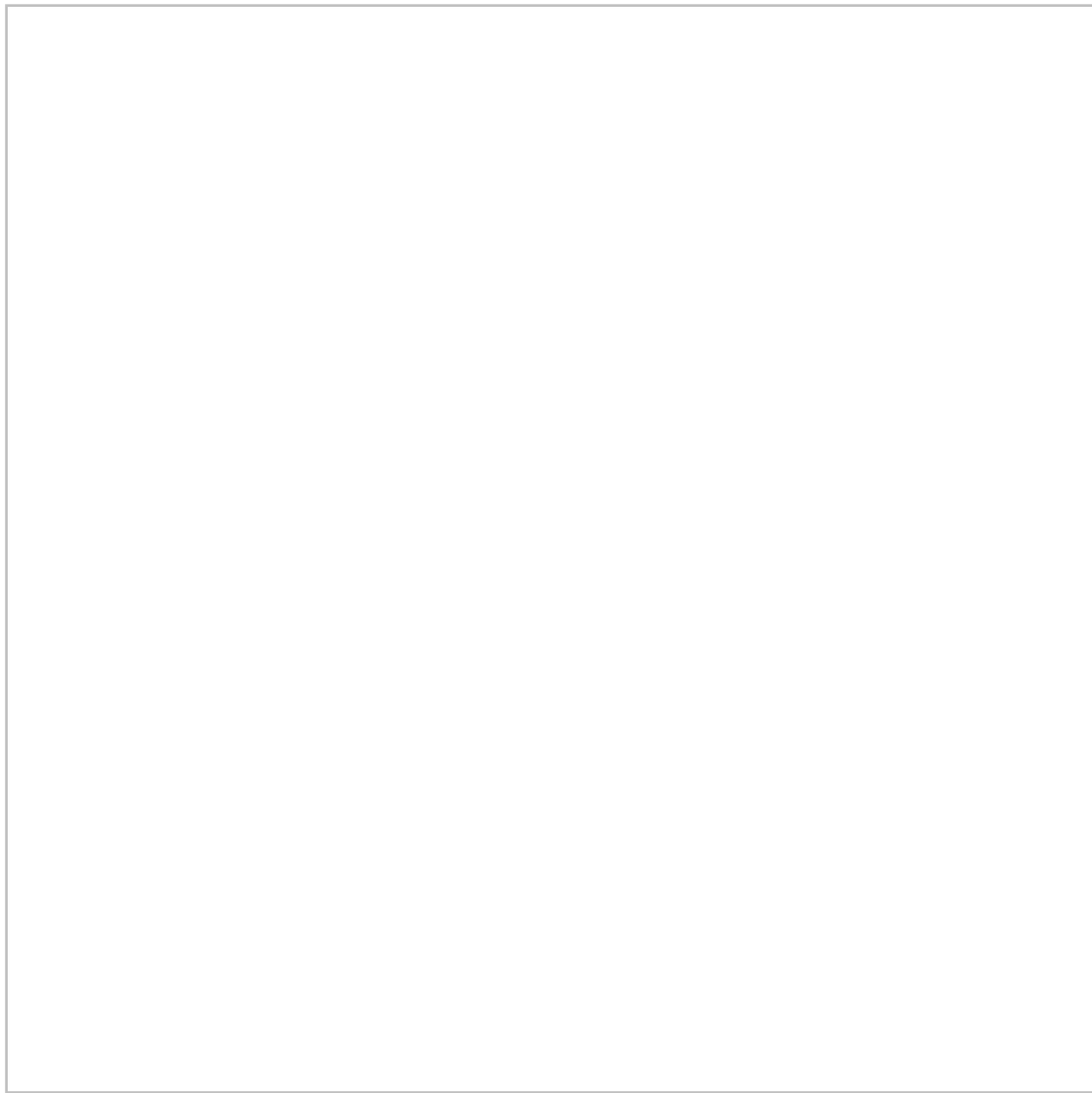
**-- Trump has reversed his support for a cut in defense spending. [Politico's Wesley Morgan reports](#):**

“Trump has told Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to submit a \$750 billion budget proposal for fiscal 2020 ... The \$750 billion figure emerged from a meeting Tuesday at the White House among Trump, Mattis and the Republican chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees ... That would dwarf the \$733 billion budget proposal Mattis and other top military leaders have been fighting to preserve and would represent a stunning about-face for a president who recently called the fiscal 2019 top line of \$716 billion for defense spending ‘crazy.’”

**-- A growing number of incoming lawmakers, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), are casting a spotlight on how Capitol Hill treats its interns and staffers. [Elise Viebeck reports](#):** “When [Ocasio-Cortez] said last week that she would not only pay her interns, but also provide more than the minimum wage, the news had an immediate impact. ... Congress performs terribly on metrics related to staff diversity, workplace protections and employee pay and benefits. Advocates warn that the system is built to accept only the most privileged young people — often white, moneyed and with connections — who later fill the pipeline for Washington’s political and business establishment. The system has gone unchallenged for years. But scrutiny by

Ocasio-Cortez and her peers after the recent midterm elections is stirring hopes that Capitol Hill might be ready for change.”





Inside the filings: Court documents reveal new contact between Trump's inner circle and Russian

## **THERE'S A BEAR IN THE WOODS:**

**-- Records show at least 14 Trump associates had contact with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign and presidential transition. [Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Carol D. Leonnig report](#): “Again and again and again, over the course of [Trump’s] 18-month campaign for the presidency, Russian citizens made contact with his closest family**

members and friends, as well as figures on the periphery of his orbit. Some offered to help his campaign and his real estate business. Some offered dirt on his Democratic opponent. Repeatedly, Russian nationals suggested Trump should hold a peacemaking sit-down with Vladimir Putin — and offered to broker such a summit. ... [T]he mounting number of communications that have been revealed occurred against the backdrop of ‘sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the U.S. presidential election,’ as [Bob] Mueller’s prosecutors wrote in a court filing last week."

**-- Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen will be sentenced on Wednesday, as federal prosecutors in Manhattan appear to shift their focus toward the Trump Organization’s possible participation in campaign-finance violations. [The New York Times’s Ben Protess, William K. Rashbaum and Maggie Haberman report](#):** “Mr. Cohen, Mr. Trump’s self-described fixer, has provided assistance in that inquiry, which is separate from the investigation by the special counsel ... In addition to implicating Mr. Trump in the payments to the two women, Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that the company’s chief financial officer was involved in discussions about them, a claim that is now a focus of the inquiry, according to [people briefed on the matter] ...

**“Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that he believes Mr. Trump personally approved the company’s decision**

**to reimburse him for one of the payments.** ... [T]here is no indication that anyone at the company will face charges in connection with the inquiry. But in recent weeks, the prosecutors contacted the company to renew a request they had made this year for documents and other materials ... The precise nature of the materials sought was unclear, but the renewed request is further indication that prosecutors continue to focus on the president's company even as the case against Mr. Cohen comes to a close."

**-- Legal experts remain divided on whether a sitting president can be indicted, a question that will carry great weight for Trump moving forward.** [The AP's Michael Balsamo reports](#): "The Supreme Court has never ruled on whether the president can be indicted or whether the president can be subpoenaed for testimony. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which provides legal advice and guidance to executive branch agencies, has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted. Two Justice Department reports, one in 1973 and one in 2000, came to the same conclusion. Those reports essentially concluded that the president's responsibilities are so important that an indictment would pose too many risks for the government to function properly. Trump's lawyers have said that [Mueller] plans to adhere to that guidance, though Mueller's office has never independently confirmed that."

**-- Conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi sued Mueller for alleged constitutional violations and leaking grand jury secrets.** [Politico's Josh Gerstein reports](#): "Corsi's new suit against Mueller also accuses the special prosecutor of trying to badger Corsi into giving false testimony that he served as a conduit between Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to then-candidate [Trump]. ... Corsi is demanding \$100 million in actual damages and \$250 million in punitive damages for injury to his reputation."

**-- Former White House counsel John Dean said the details revealed in Mueller's court filings give Congress "little choice" but to start impeachment proceedings.** "I don't know that this will forever disappear into some dark hole of unprosecutable presidents," Dean said. "I think it will resurface in the Congress. I think what this totality of [Friday's] filings show that the House is going to have little choice, the way this is going, other than to start impeachment proceedings." ([Michael Brice-Saddler](#))





Are new Russia probe findings a dire sign for Trump? Lawmakers weigh in.

**-- Republican lawmakers defended Trump on the Sunday shows amid his escalating legal troubles.**

[Felicia Sonmez and Ariana Eunjung Cha report](#): “In an interview on NBC News’s ‘Meet the Press,’ Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) played down the alleged campaign finance violations detailed by prosecutors, arguing that such missteps should not be ‘over-criminalized.’ ... He added that if campaign finance violations are aggressively prosecuted, ‘we’re going to become a banana republic,

where every president gets prosecuted and every president gets thrown in jail when they're done with office.' ... Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said Sunday on CBS News's 'Face the Nation' that 'there's no reason to not stand by anybody in this moment,' drawing a distinction between individuals who have been accused of crimes and pleaded guilty and others, presumably Trump."

**-- But Rubio added that, if Trump chooses to pardon Manafort, it could "trigger a debate" about overhauling pardon powers.** "I don't believe that any pardons should be used with relation to these particular cases, frankly," Rubio said on [ABC News](#). "Not only does it not pass the smell test, I just think it undermines the reason why we have presidential pardons in the first place, and I think, in fact, that if something like that were to happen, it could trigger a debate about whether the pardon powers should be amended given these circumstances, so I hope that they don't do that. It would be a terrible mistake if they did."

**-- And Rand voiced concerns about Trump's attorney general nominee, William Barr.** [Sonmez reports](#): "'I'm concerned that he's been a big supporter of the Patriot Act, which lowered the standard for spying on Americans. And he even went so far as to say, you know, the Patriot Act was pretty good, but we should go much further.' ... Paul said that while he hasn't made a decision on Barr, 'I

can tell you, the first things that I've learned about him being for more surveillance of Americans is very, very troubling.”



Former FBI director James Comey goes through security as he arrives to testify before the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees on Capitol Hill. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Former FBI director Jim Comey dodged many questions from House lawmakers about the bureau's 2016 investigations, often citing overlap with**

**Mueller's probe.** [Karoun Demirjian and Matt Zapotosky report](#): “Republicans from the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees peppered Comey with questions about the FBI’s investigation into former secretary of state Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server, including whether Comey would have dismissed former officials Peter Strzok and Lisa Page from the probe had he known they were exchanging texts disparaging [Trump]. Comey said he probably would have. However, the former director repeatedly declined to answer questions seeking detailed answers about elements of the FBI’s Russia investigation, which Comey either could not recall — such as who prepared the document launching the bureau’s counterintelligence investigation of individuals affiliated with Trump — or thought came too close to [Mueller’s investigation].”

**-- An FBI official who accompanied Comey for his testimony at one point confirmed Mueller is investigating Trump’s possible obstruction of justice.** [The Atlantic’s Andrew Kragie reports](#): “The moment came as Representative Trey Gowdy, the retiring South Carolina Republican who grew famous for leading a Benghazi investigation, was asking Comey whether he considered a Justice Department memo sufficient grounds for Trump to fire him. The FBI official, Cecilia Bessee, interrupted Gowdy: ‘Mr. Chairman, to the extent that question goes—again, goes to the special counsel’s investigation into obstruction, the witness will not be able

to answer.’”

**-- Speaking to an audience in New York last night, Comey implored American voters to end Trump’s presidency by electing a Democrat in 2020. [CNN’s Gregory Krieg reports](#): “All of us should use every breath we have to make sure the lies stop on January 20, 2021,’ Comey told an audience at the 92nd Street Y on New York City’s Upper East Side. He all but begged Democrats to set aside their ideological differences and nominate the person best suited to defeating Trump in an election. ‘I understand the Democrats have important debates now over who their candidate should be,’ Comey told MSNBC’s Nicolle Wallace, ‘but they have to win. They have to win.’ ... Asked if Trump might be an unindicted co-conspirator in some of the crimes recently described by [Mueller], Comey said he didn’t know, ‘but if he’s not there, he’s certainly close.’”**

**-- Robby Mook, who managed Hillary Clinton’s campaign, has an I-told-you-so [op-ed for Monday’s Post](#) that outlines just how much was publicly known about Trump’s ties to Russia before the election: “Obviously, much more evidence about Russia’s interference has come out since 2016. But I’m not sure we’ve learned the bigger lesson: Why did it take two years and dozens of indictments for so many to believe that Russia was not only behind the DNC hack but may also have been in cahoots with the Trump campaign,**

when there was so much evidence at the time? It's as if something needs to be secret or hidden to truly matter. If it's sealed in a courtroom, it must be a bombshell, but if it's out in the open, it's just not as serious. **Trump will not be the last of his kind. The next time so much evidence about a candidate is sitting out in plain view, let's hope it gets a good look before Americans cast their votes."**



**MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

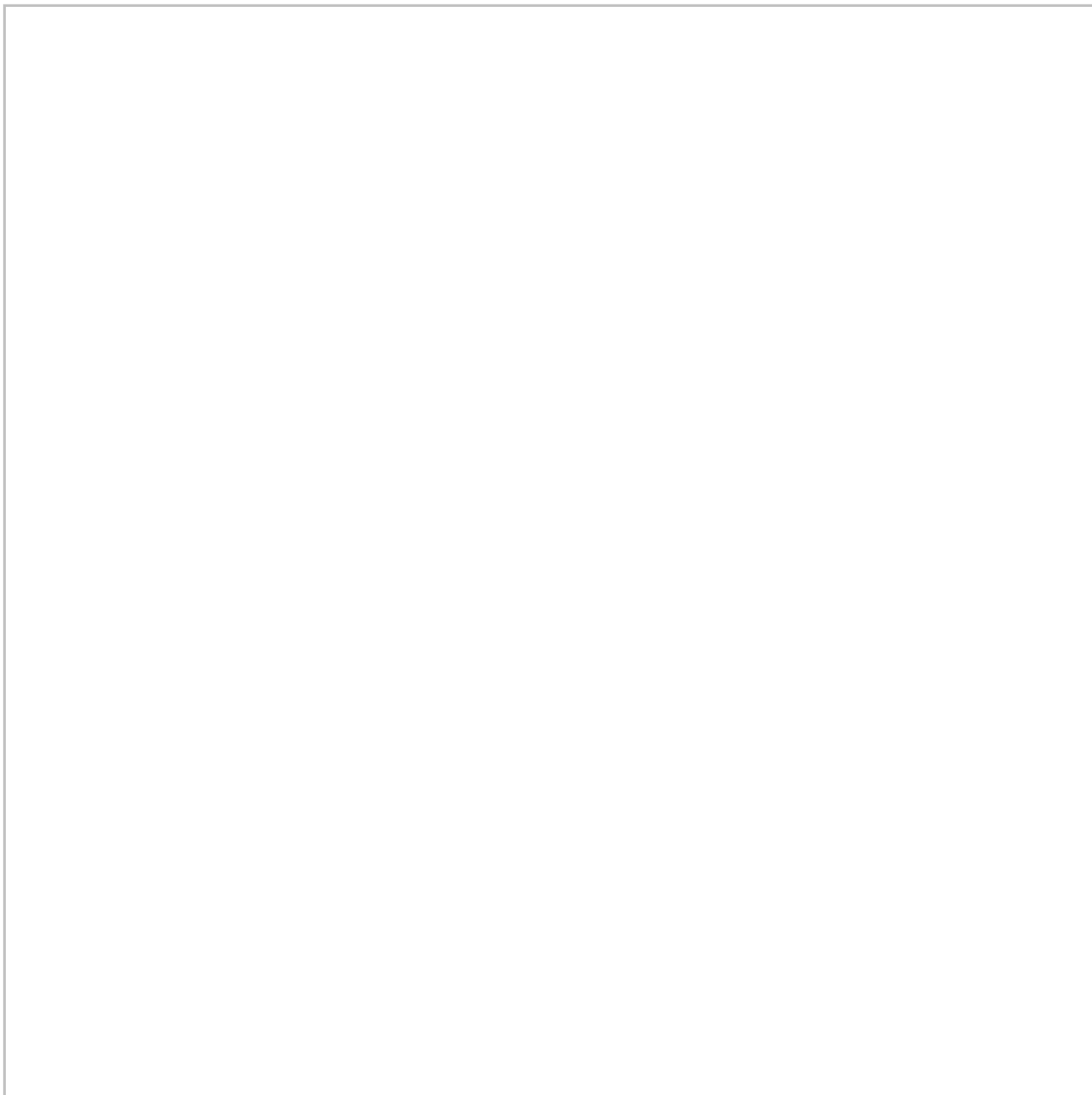
**-- Wisconsin's Democratic governor-elect suggested he may pursue legal challenges against Republicans' lame-duck legislation. [Felicia Sonmez reports](#):** “‘I’m not making any promises one way or the other, but we’re looking at all issues, all options on the table,’ [Gov.-elect Tony Evers] said ... ‘I need to stand up for the people of Wisconsin. There’s 2.6 million people that voted in this last election, and they expect me to do that. So we’re going to pursue this.’ Evers said that he has urged Gov. Scott Walker (R) to veto the bills but that Walker was ‘noncommittal.’ Walker has previously signaled support for the measures.”

**-- The House Democratic caucus will be divided between progressives trying to push their party to the left and moderates looking for common ground with Republicans, a combination that could complicate their efforts to pass legislation. [Bloomberg News's Sahil Kapur reports](#):** “How Speaker-in-waiting Nancy Pelosi manages the tension, which is already on display, will frame the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination race, as the House will serve as the party’s main power center to advance its agenda and draw contrasts with [Trump]. Messy battles between the party’s factions risk undercutting Democrats hopes of rallying to defeat Trump in the next election, potentially costing them the chance to define the political debate and highlight favorable issues.”

**-- Now that all the midterm elections have officially concluded, Dave Weigel writes that Republicans have a clear path to regaining the House majority in 2020.**

[From Weigel](#): “[The number of] House Democrats in Trump districts: 30, up from 13 before the election, though it will tick up to 31 if a special election is called in North Carolina's 9th District and Republicans don't win. ... You don't have to squint to see a path back to a Republican majority in 2020; winning a little more than half of these seats would do that. But the flipped districts fall into two distinct categories. In 10 districts, Trump ran weaker than Mitt Romney had in 2012, while in the other 20, he ran stronger.”





Beto O'Rourke greets supporters following a rally in Austin. (Nick Wagner/Austin American-Statesman/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Early voting in California and Texas could fundamentally alter the Democratic primaries in 2020.** [NBC News's Alex Seitz-Wald reports](#): "A little over a year from now, millions of Californians will be mailed their ballots on the same day that Iowans head to their famous first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses. They could start

mailing them back before New Hampshire holds its first-in-the-nation primary in 2020. Meanwhile, Texans will likely have a chance to vote early, too — even before Nevada and South Carolina, which typically round out the earliest portion of the primary calendar. The explosion of early voting and reshuffling of the primary calendar in 2020 could transform the Democratic presidential nominating contest, potentially diminishing the power of the traditional, tiny and homogeneous early states in favor of much larger and more diverse battlegrounds. That would be a boon to the best-known candidates with war chests sizable enough to compete in big states early. And it would empower black and Hispanic voters in large, multiracial states like California, which was a virtual afterthought at the back of the primary calendar in 2016.”

**-- Nebraska Democrats decided to return to a primary system for 2020 rather than hold another caucus. [The Omaha World-Herald's Roseann Moring and Micah Mertes report](#):** “The state’s Democrats had been choosing their presidential nominee by caucus since 2008 in a system similar to Iowa’s. ... But Nebraska Democratic Party’s State Central Committee voted at its meeting in Ord on Saturday to discontinue the system and go back to regular primary voting. The change was overwhelmingly approved on a voice vote following about 90 minutes of debate. Critics of the caucuses cited the several-hour investment that voters have to make and said it could decrease turnout in the May primary, when

nominees for other offices are chosen.”

**-- Potential Democratic candidates are worried about how Beto O’Rourke could shake up the 2020 race if he chooses to run. [The New York Times’s Matt Flegenheimer and Jonathan Martin report](#):** “[O’Rourke] has emerged as the wild card of the presidential campaign-in-waiting for a Democratic Party that lacks a clear 2020 front-runner. ... Advisers to other prospective Democratic candidates for 2020 acknowledge that Mr. O’Rourke is worthy of their concern. His record-setting success with small donors would test the grass-roots strength of progressives like Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. His sometimes saccharine call to summon the nation’s better angels would compete with the likely pitch of Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. And his appeal to some former Obama advisers — and, potentially, his electoral coalition of young people, women and often infrequent voters — could complicate a possible run for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who would aim to win back many of his former boss’s constituencies.”

**-- Elizabeth Warren’s aides have started looking for a campaign headquarters in the Boston area. [Politico’s Natasha Korecki reports](#):** “Warren has the core of her 2020 team in place if she runs for president. ... All that’s left is for her to give the green light. When and if she does, she’ll be rolling out arguably the most advanced

and sweeping infrastructure in the Democratic field, a plug-and-play campaign that could give her a massive head start on nearly every contender in the burgeoning primary roster, with only Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) coming close.”

**-- Technology is transforming how potential 2020 candidates present themselves to voters. [Michael](#)**

[Scherer reports](#): “The 2020 campaign ... will take place in a media landscape that has shifted in just the past two years and been radically transformed since the 2008 primary, which began before the release of the first iPhone. Iowa hay bale speeches and cable news primary debates will still play a role. But Democratic strategists say the quest to capture the attention of Democrats online, through social streams and viral sharing that exude a sense of immediacy and authenticity, could dominate the early months in a crowded field, as energized voters subscribe and swipe in search of a candidate match.”



People rally at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington to protest the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

## THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- A transcript of Jamal Khashoggi's killing revealed the Post contributing columnist's final words: "I can't breathe." [CNN's Nic Robertson reports](#): "[One] source, who has read a translated transcript of an audio recording of Khashoggi's painful last moments, said it was clear that the killing on October 2 was no botched rendition

attempt, but the execution of a premeditated plan to murder the journalist. During the course of the gruesome scene, the source describes Khashoggi struggling against a group of people determined to kill him. 'I can't breathe,' Khashoggi says. 'I can't breathe.' 'I can't breathe.' The transcript notes the sounds of Khashoggi's body being dismembered by a saw, as the alleged perpetrators are advised to listen to music to block out the sound. And, according to the source, the transcript suggests that a series of phone calls are made, briefing them on progress."

**-- British Prime Minister Theresa May was criticized as a traitor days before a Parliament vote on her Brexit deal. [William Booth reports](#):** "[A] march was called by the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), a once-ascendant movement now in decline, dominated by 'Euroskeptics' and right-wing populists. They were at the forefront of the winning Brexit campaign two years ago ... Now the Ukipers and their allies at the rally say they are being double-crossed by 'the establishment,' aided by a 'seditious BBC,' and a deep state of pro-Europe civil servants and global capitalists led by May. In the crowd, one man held aloft a gallows with a hangman's noose. Others shouted that May should be 'taken to the Tower,' the medieval palace-prison where Henry VIII had his wives killed."

**-- The Brexit deal is widely expected to be defeated,**

**which will probably set off a flurry of last-minute negotiations to avoid some of the most dire consequences of the country's withdrawal from the European Union.** [Michael Birnbaum reports](#): “Europeans have gone slackjawed at London’s political chaos, with normally demure diplomats comparing the process there to a slow-motion car wreck. They say they can offer little other than cosmetic tweaks that might help May save face with her own Conservative Party. And they have begun to accelerate their emergency planning to prepare safety nets that could avoid some of the humanitarian and economic chaos that might happen if Britain crashes out of the European Union on its deadline of March 29, with no other plan in place.”

**-- France has opened an investigation into possible Russian involvement with the country’s Yellow Vest protests.** [Bloomberg News’s Carol Matlack and Robert Williams report](#): “According to the Alliance for Securing Democracy, about 600 Twitter accounts known to promote Kremlin views have begun focusing on France, boosting their use of the hashtag #giletsjaunes, the French name for the Yellow Vest movement. French security services are looking at the situation, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Sunday in a radio interview with RTL.”

**SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

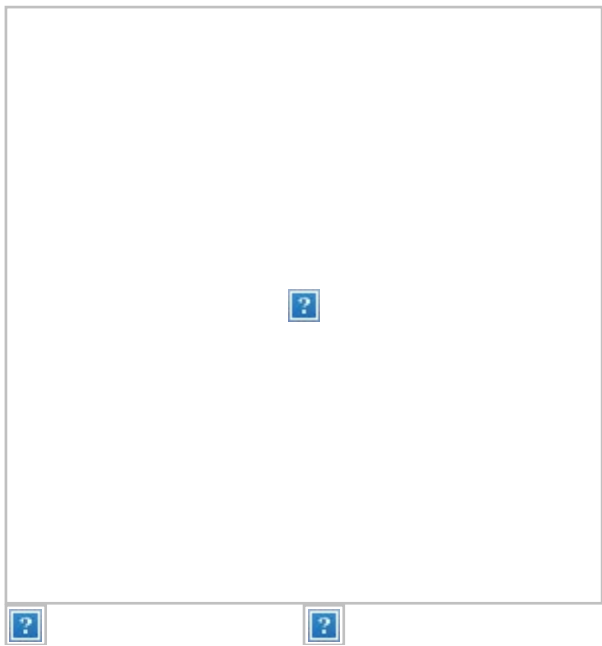
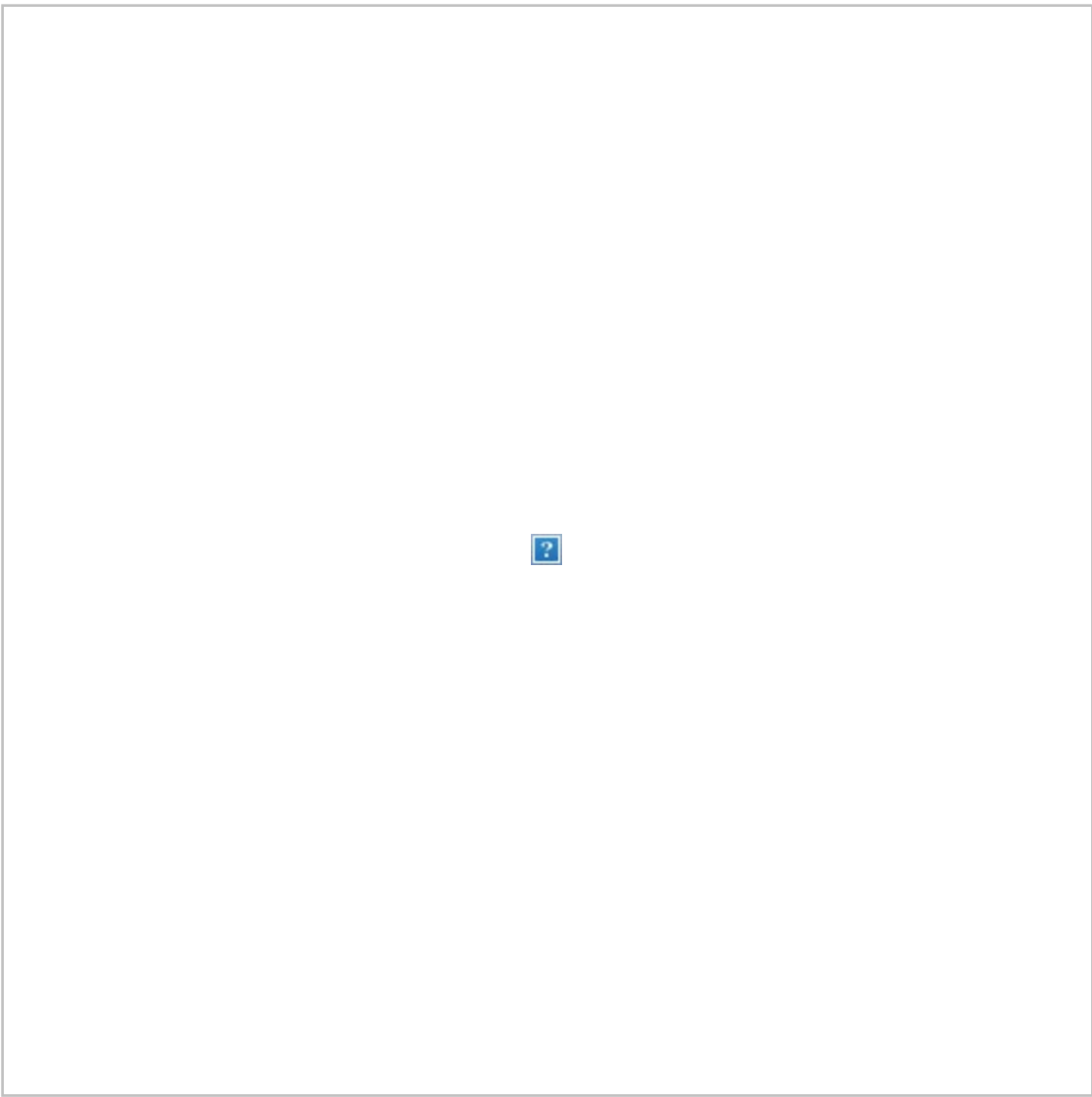
Trump dismissed a possible campaign-finance violation as a “simple private transaction.”



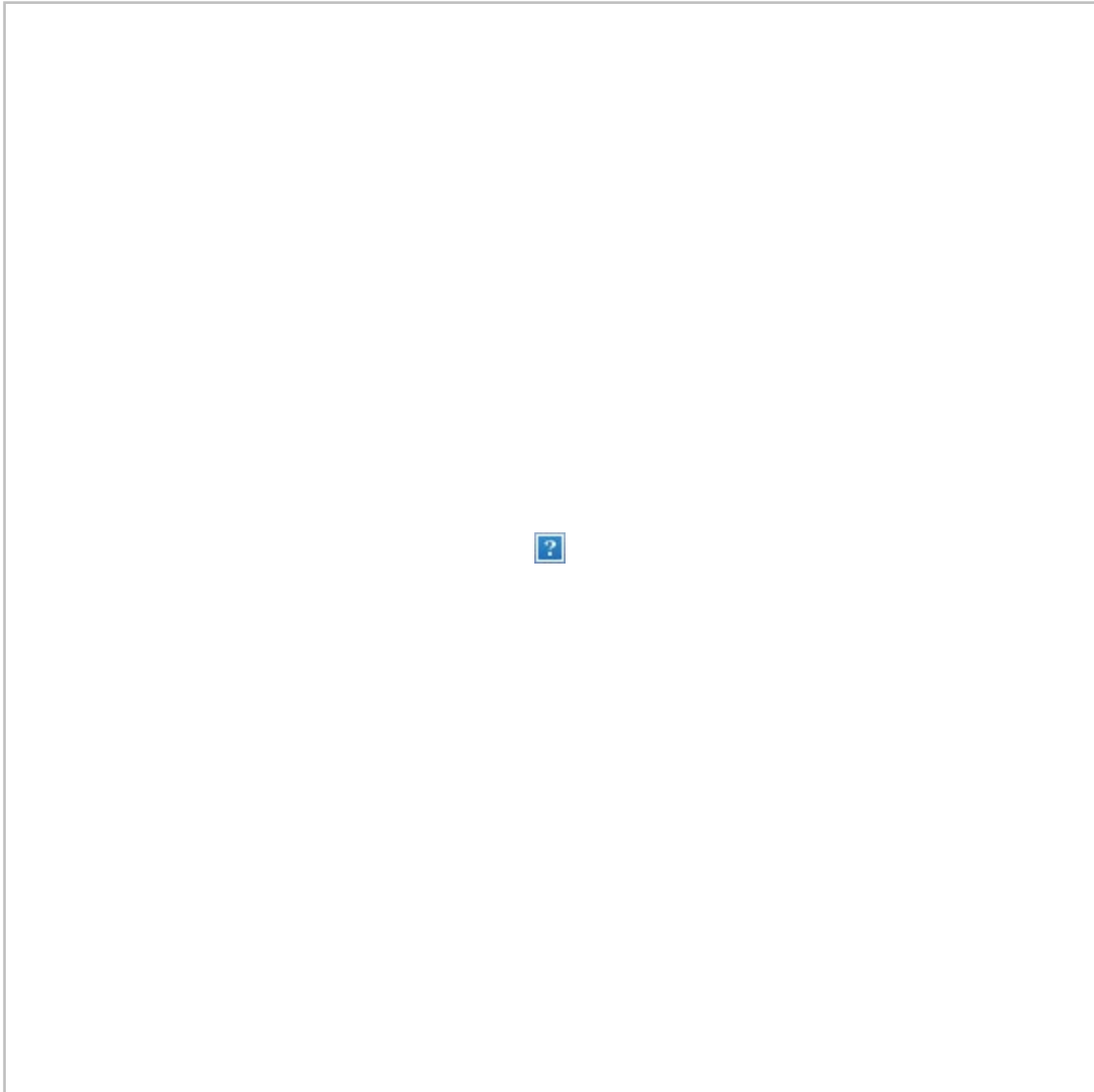




And he downplayed the chief of staff drama:



D.C. Twitter was dominated by buzz about Kelly, Ayers and the chief of staff search. From a CNN reporter:



Jeb Bush's former communications director cast doubt on the official storyline surrounding Ayers not getting the job:



Ayers confirmed he'll leave the White House at the end of the month:



From a Los Angeles Times editor:



A former spokesman for Hillary Clinton mocked Trump's search for a chief of staff:



A Democratic congresswoman called on Kelly to apologize:



An MSNBC producer listed the many departures so far from the Trump administration:

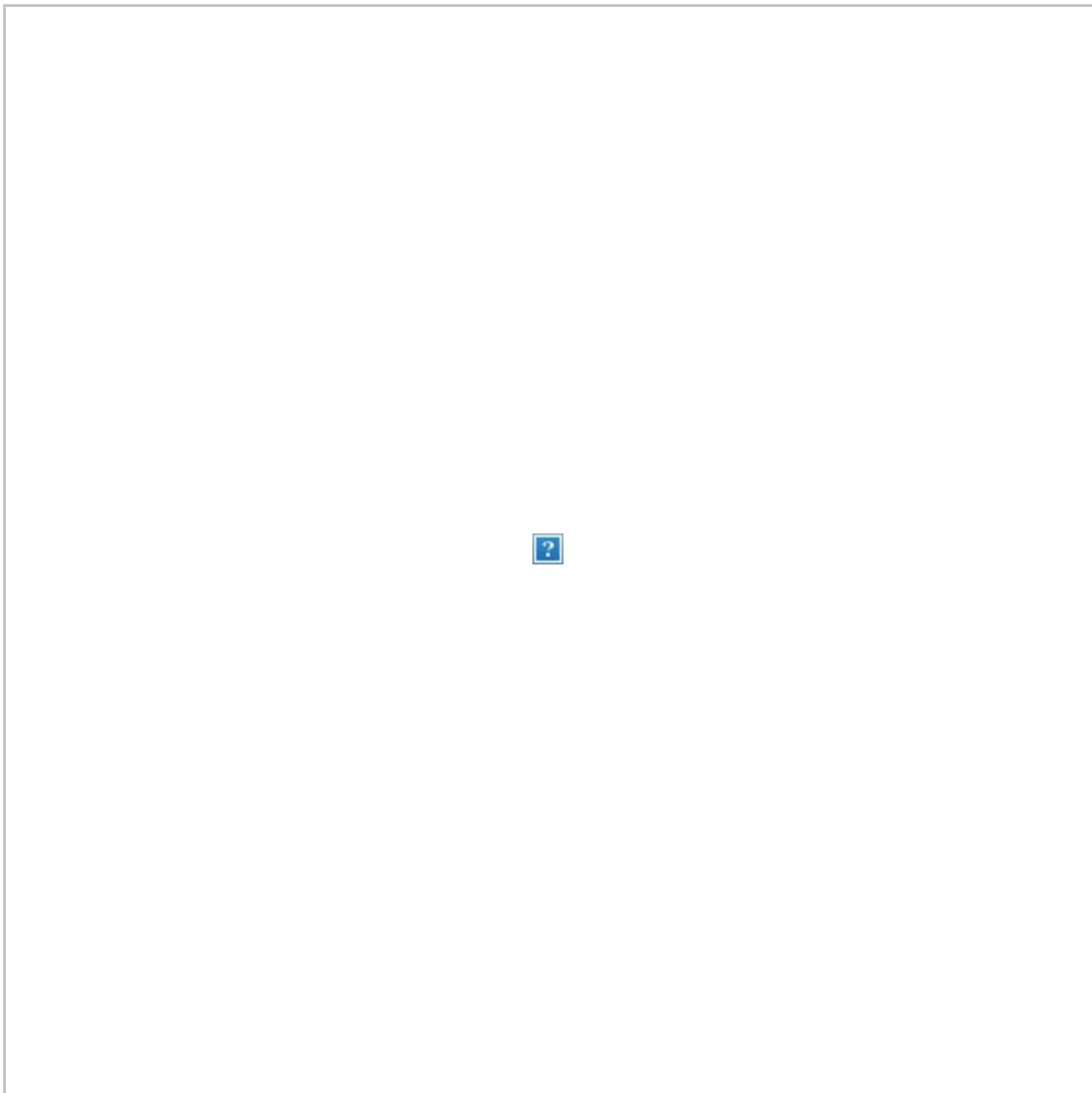




Trump once again blamed the "Fake News Media" for negative coverage of his administration:



A former spokesman for Obama's Justice Department reflected on reports that prosecutors are weighing charging Trump for campaign-finance violations if he loses reelection:



A Bloomberg News reporter noted GOP lawmakers who have previously voted for impeachment:



A former Trump campaign adviser promoted a conspiracy theory about how federal agents obtained a FISA warrant on him:



A former FBI agent responded with context on the requirements for a FISA warrant:



Papadopoulos replied:

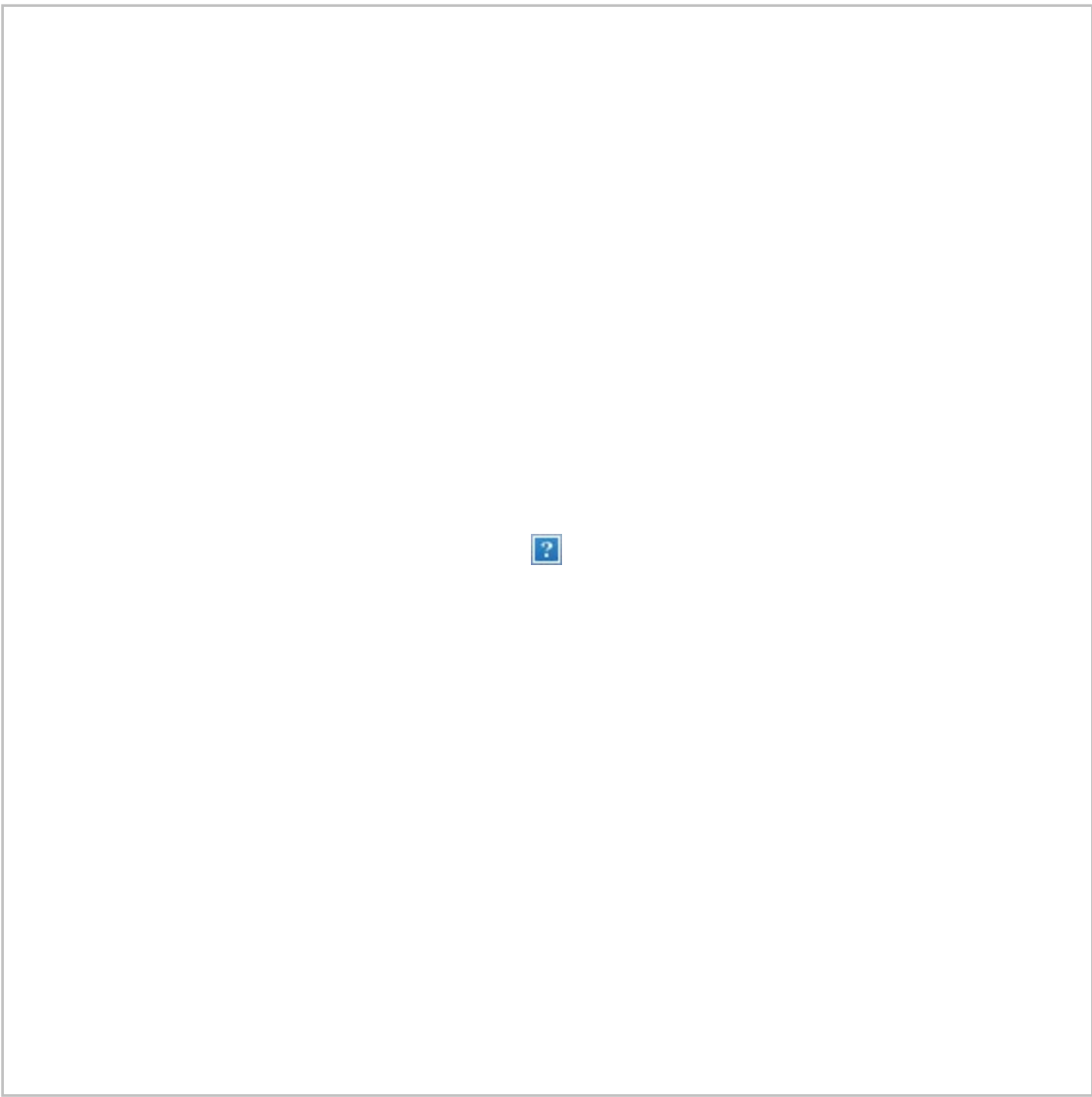


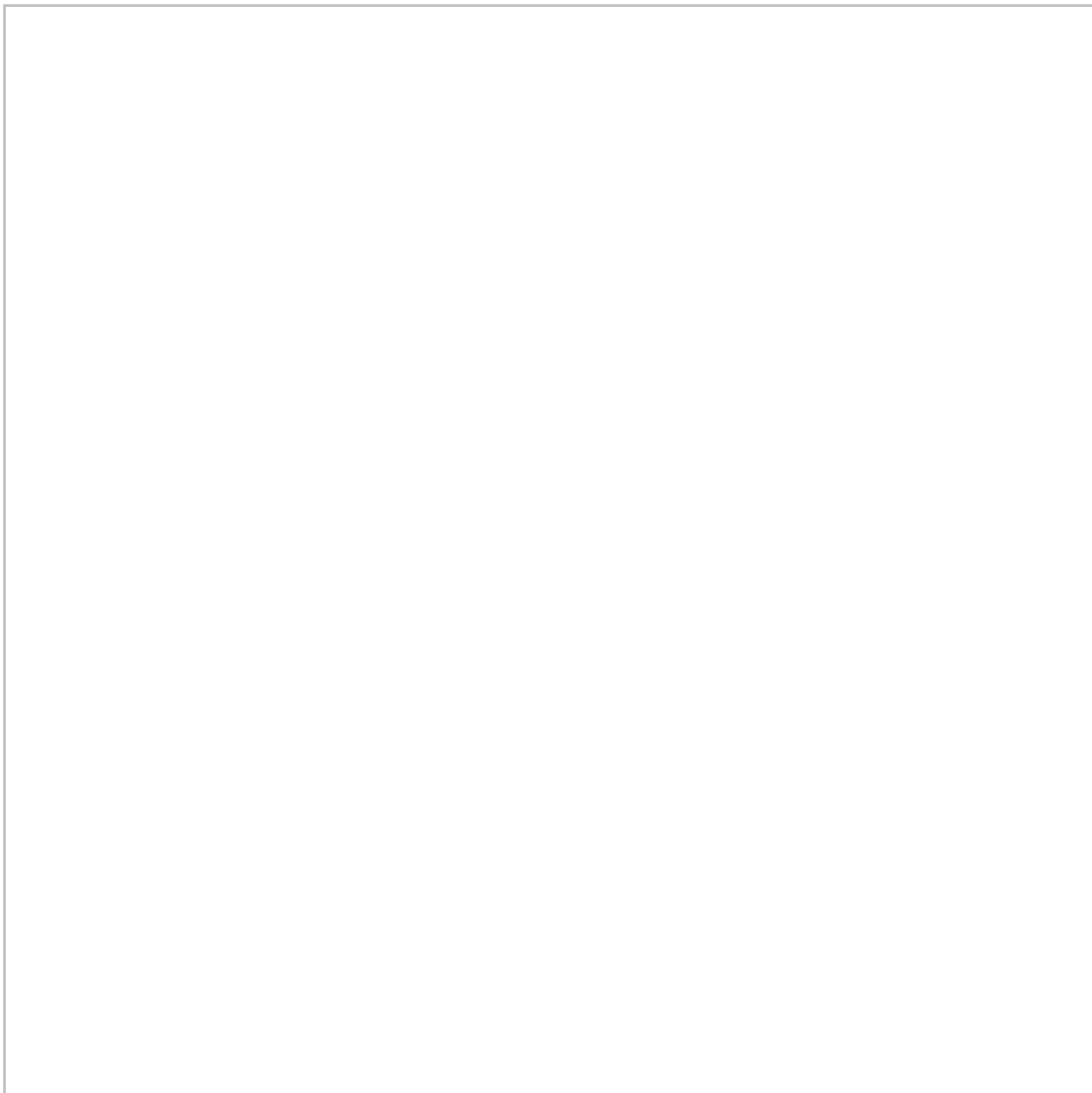
A Democratic congresswoman-elect reacted to a Weekly Standard reporter's criticism:



But the reporter then apologized, allowing for a rare moment of Twitter forgiveness:



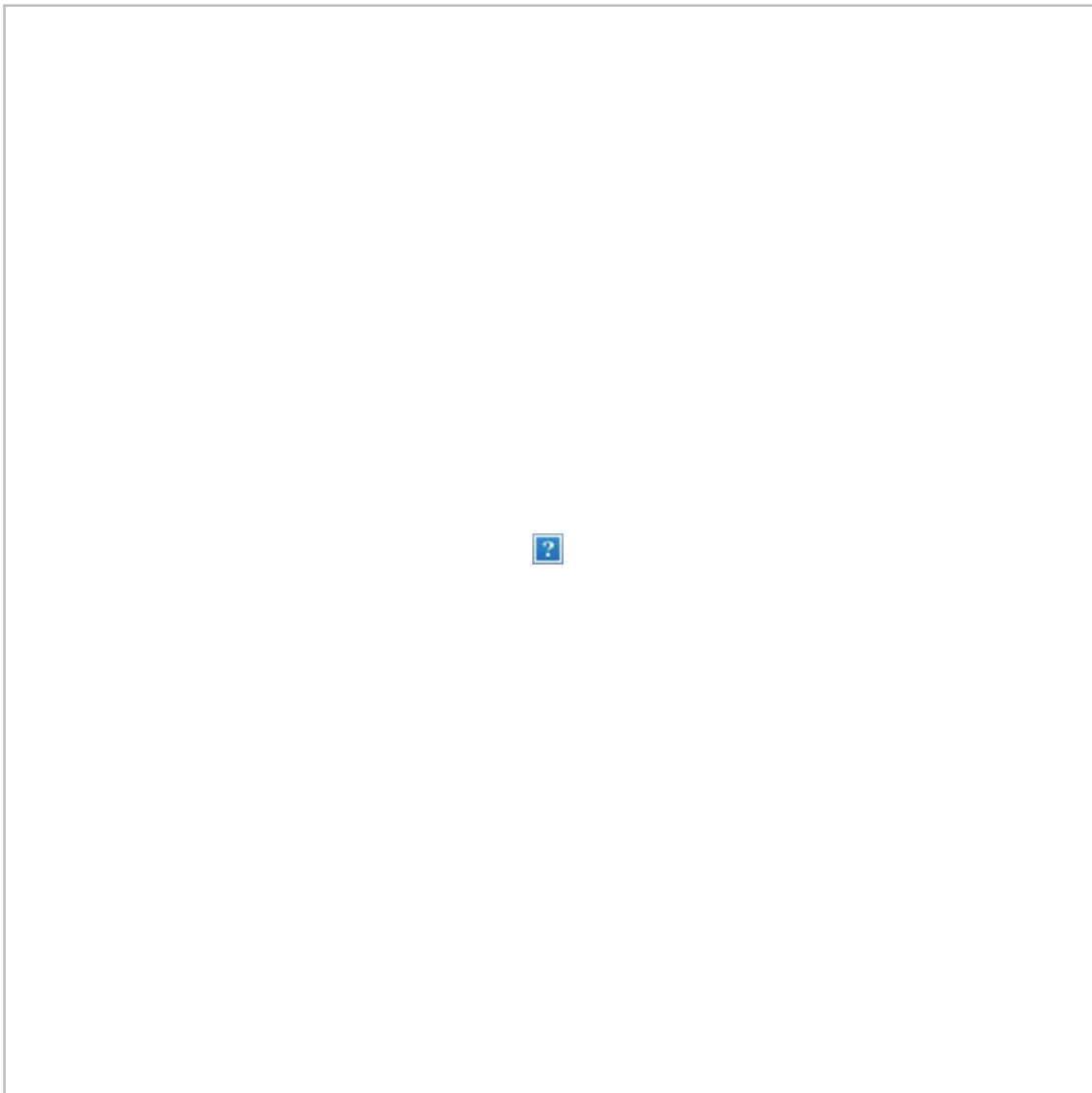




Michelle Obama retweeted a story about a young girl dressing up like the former first lady for her school's Cultural Heroes Day:



An NPR host commented on his employer's reliance on temps:



And a former Obama administration official highlighted an important panel on MSNBC:



## GOOD READS:

-- [“Meet Melania Trump’s enforcer. It’s not her husband,”](#) by Sarah Ellison: “Staffers in [Trump’s] White House are measured by longevity. There’s the November 9th Club, the nickname for those who joined after Trump won the election. There are those who joined the campaign earlier, but only after he secured the nomination. And there are a few who came on board when his campaign was largely viewed as a joke by the

GOP establishment — and everyone else. Few in Trump's White House have a history with him that dates as far back as Stephanie Grisham. For nearly two years, she served as communications director for first lady Melania Trump. A few weeks ago, she received a promotion to deputy chief of staff for communications and has become one of the more powerful figures in the ever-evolving Trump White House. Back in the summer of 2015, she was a lowly press wrangler on Trump's campaign."

-- New York Times, "[What Straight-A Students Get Wrong](#)," by Adam Grant: "The evidence is clear: Academic excellence is not a strong predictor of career excellence. Across industries, research shows that the correlation between grades and job performance is modest in the first year after college and trivial within a handful of years. ... Academic grades rarely assess qualities like creativity, leadership and teamwork skills, or social, emotional and political intelligence. Yes, straight-A students master cramming information and regurgitating it on exams. But career success is rarely about finding the right solution to a problem — it's more about finding the right problem to solve."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**"Suffering pickaxes**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Miami's 'big bad**

and dog poop, Trump's Hollywood star has become a symbolic spectacle," from Rob Kuznia: "Since Trump announced his campaign for the Oval Office in 2015, his Walk of Fame star has been a constant source of conflict and spectacle. The pink pentagram has been destroyed twice, obliterated by a pickax two weeks before the 2016 election and again this past July. It has been a regular target of lesser vandalism: stomping, spitting and dog-pooing. It has been scrawled with pejoratives and spray-painted with swastikas. On Sept.

she-wolf' finishes a 29-year run in Congress," from the Miami Herald: "As Miami's longest-tenured congresswoman [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen] finishes out her final weeks in office, there's still plenty of work to do. Her bill that would limit U.S. loans to the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega until he carries out democratic reforms passed the U.S. Senate, though it still needs final passage in the House of Representatives and [Trump's] signature. Another bill named in her honor would authorize defense and security

20, a few weeks after the shattered star was replaced, a street artist covered it with bars resembling a jail cell. This has become ground zero for the West Coast's grass-roots war over the Trump presidency, a sidewalk attraction for pro- and anti-Trumpers alike. ... Installed in 2007, Trump's star has been guarded by fake Russian soldiers, crowned by a golden toilet and enclosed by a mini-wall lined with mock barbed wire."

spending assistance for Israel, and it has an uncertain fate in the final weeks of this year's Congress. Though Ros-Lehtinen is leaving office, her anti-communist worldview, inspired by a childhood in Cuba, lives on through dozens of former staffers and associates who occupy positions of power in government, notably Sen. Marco Rubio, a former intern. The legacy of her outsized influence on foreign policy and Latin American affairs will continue long after she leaves elected office."

**DAYBOOK:**



**Trump** will have lunch with **Pence**. He has no other events on his public schedule.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:**

**“I think you are beyond the stage that led to the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton, whether or not you think that that was worthy of impeachment.” – Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) on Mueller’s latest court filings. ([ABC News](#))**

**NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington will see a lot of sunshine Monday to partly make up for the cold weather. [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “Sunday’s southern storm gradually pulls away from the North Carolina coast and sunshine returns in its wake. Despite the sun, chilly breezes (around 10 mph) from the north hold high temperatures to the low 40s.”**

**-- The Redskins lost to the Giants 40-16, further hurting the team’s slim playoff chances. ([Les Carpenter](#))**

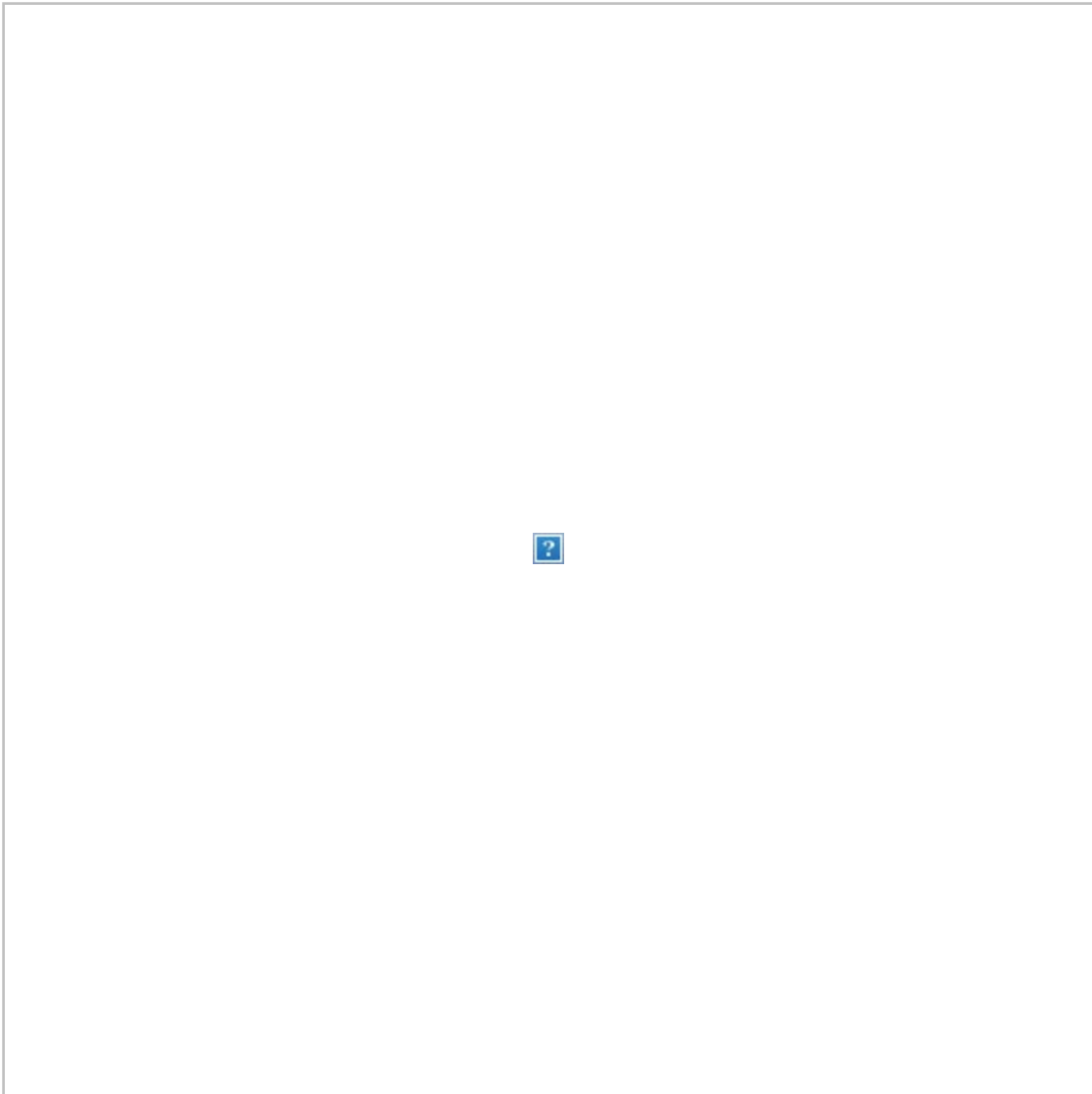
**-- Supporters of Initiative 77 are scrambling to collect**

**signatures in an attempt to overturn the D.C. Council's repeal of the minimum wage hike for tipped workers.** [Fenit Nirappil reports](#): "But a combination of procedural rules, legal challenges and bad timing left referendum supporters with a week to collect about 25,000 signatures required to put the issue back on the ballot. If they can collect enough signatures, the city would hold a special election early next year. Officials with the 'Save Our Vote' coalition have deployed more than 100 signature collectors outside supermarkets, government buildings, bars and even dog parks to pull off what seems like an insurmountable task. They are paying circulators \$3.75 a signature with the possibility of more, quadruple the standard rate. Workers have been working around the clock in a Northwest D.C. house since last Thursday, verifying that signatures belong to registered D.C. voters."

**-- George Washington University officials are pushing to end a project started in 1997 to honor the legacy of Jackie Robinson.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "The decision sparked an outcry from students, donors and teachers who testify to the impact of the project. The Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society, a student group associated with the project, launched a petition that has been signed by 499 people and that urges administrators to allow the project to continue."

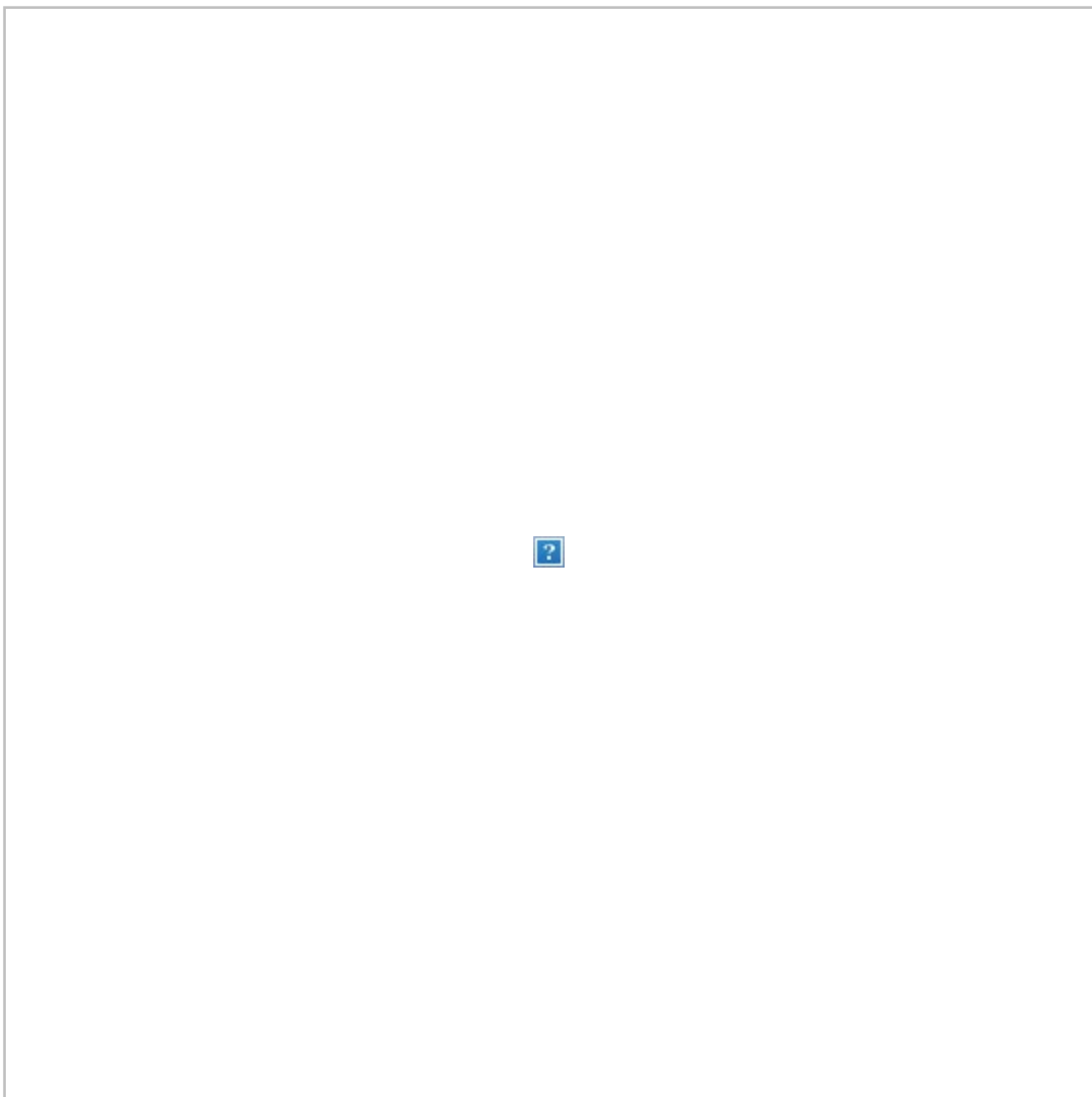
**VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

SNL imagined what would happen if Trump were black:



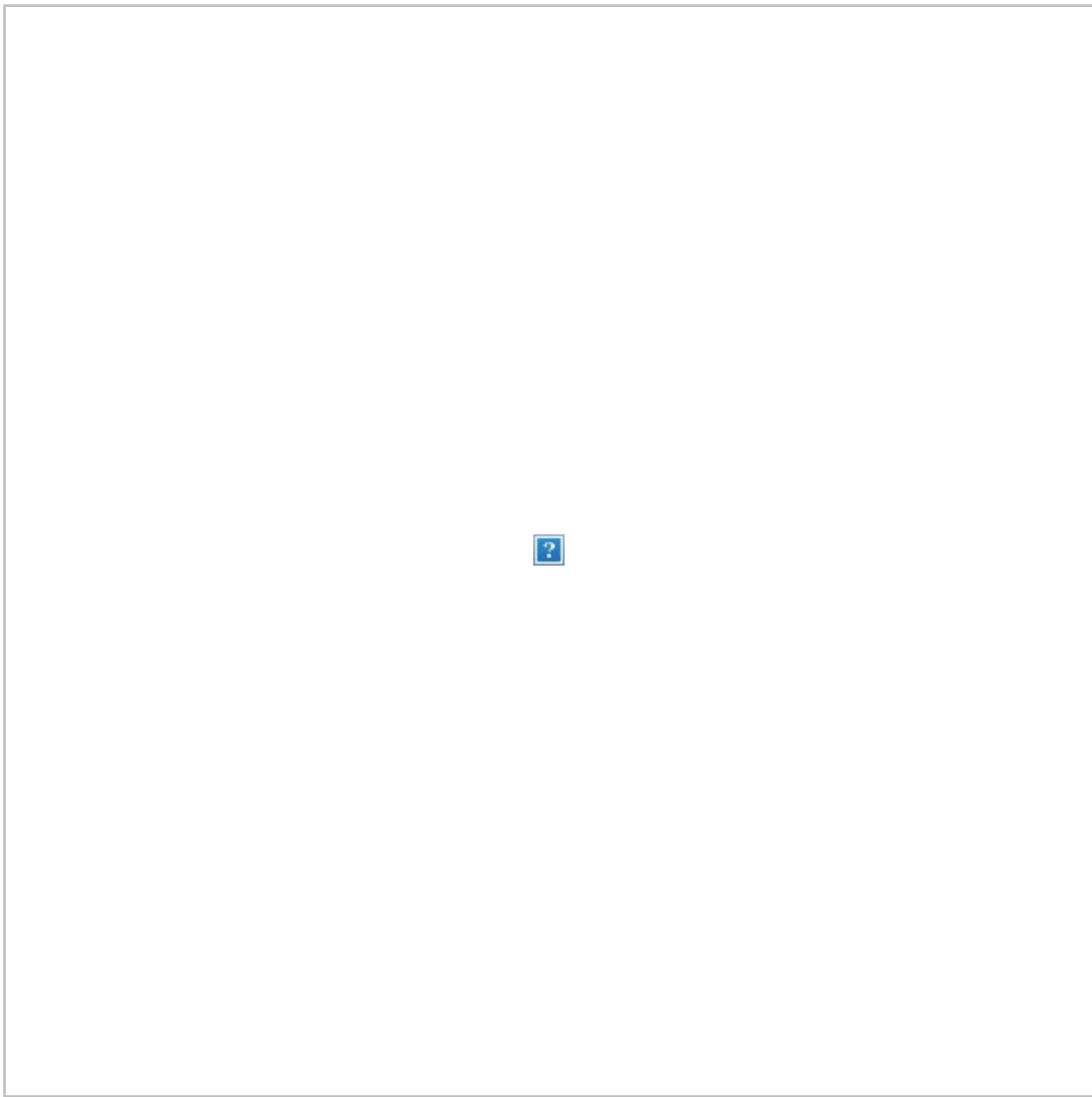
Them Trumps - SNL

SNL's Michael Che defended Kevin Hart after the comedian stepped down from hosting the Oscars over old tweets containing homophobic language:



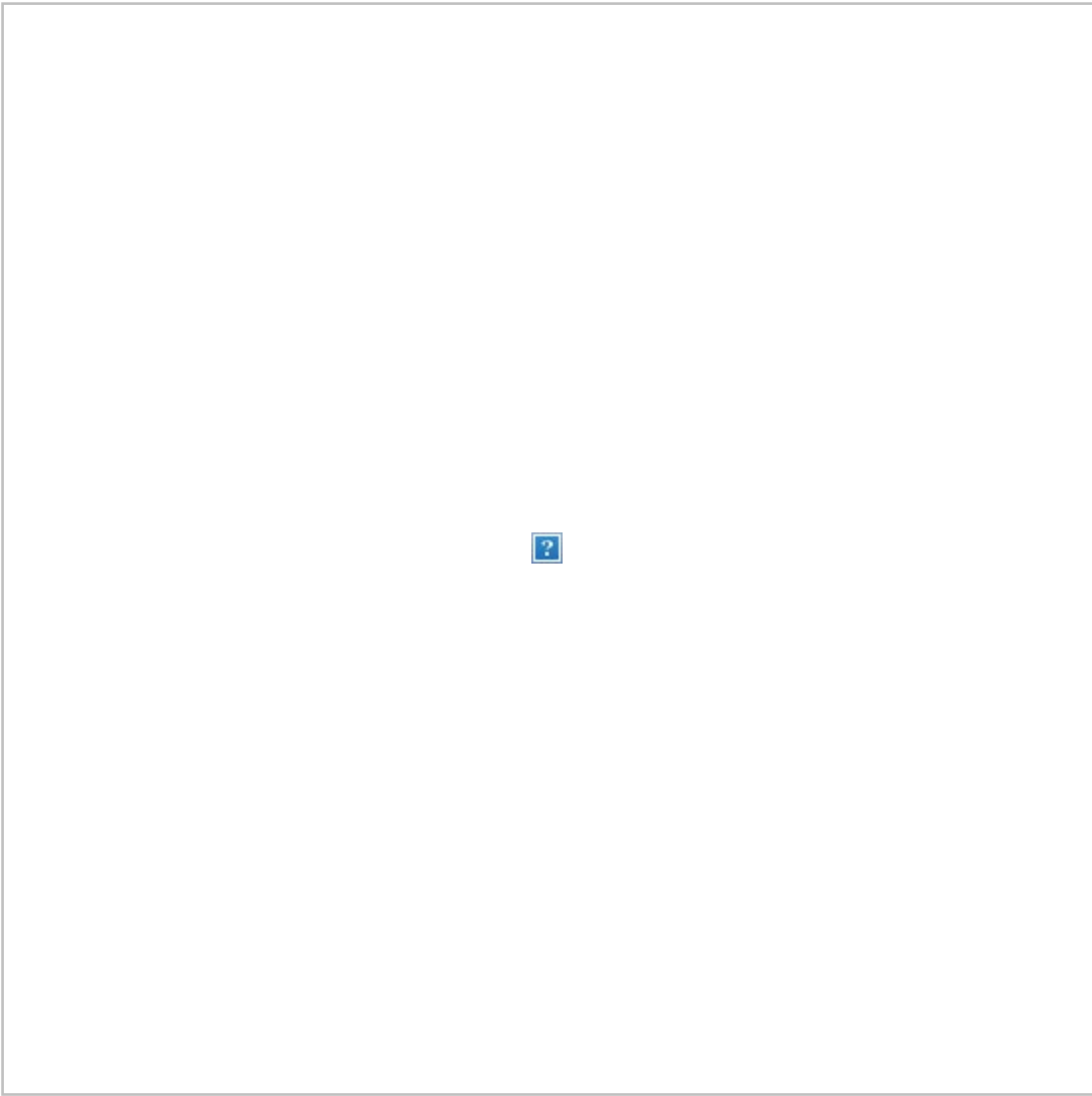
Weekend Update: SpaceX Launches Rocket with Cremated Remains - SNL

Trump tossed the coin at the Army-Navy game:



Trump tosses the coin for the Army-Navy game

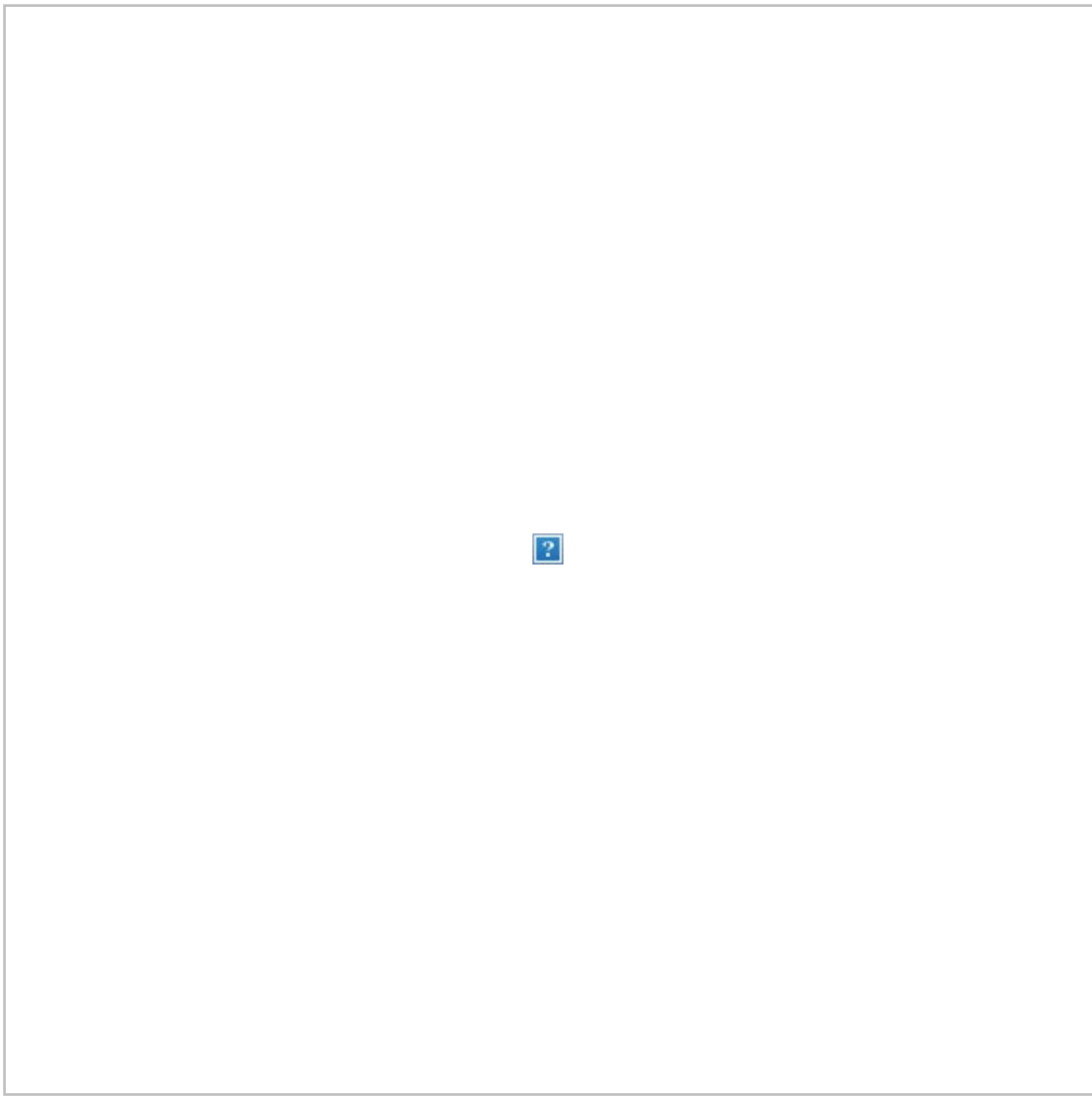
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez revealed her own Jewish ancestry on the last night of Hanukkah:



Two men were caught on camera robbing a Salvation Army collection kettle in Minnesota:

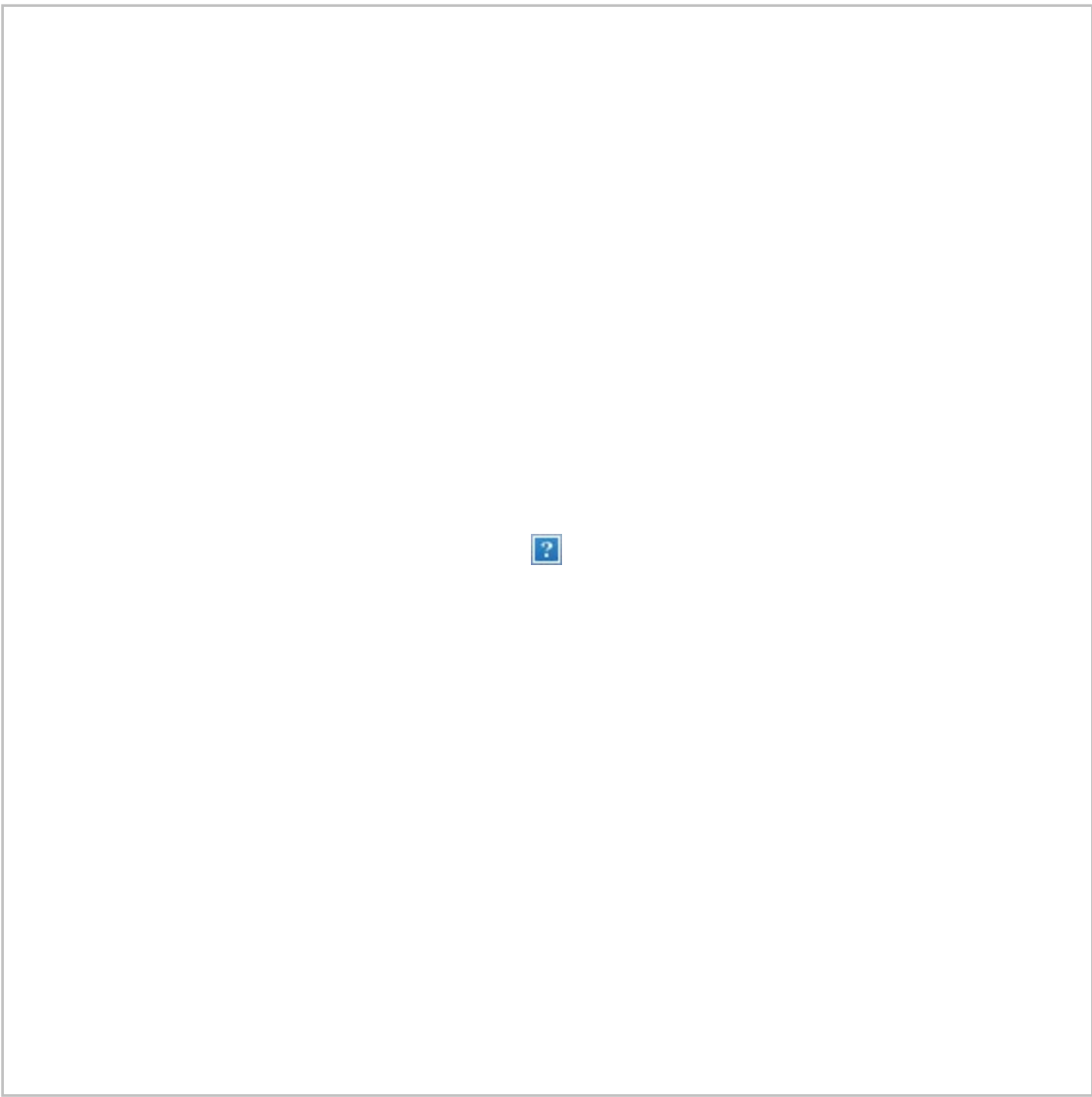


Miami beat New England with a wild final play:



And an NBA player's unfortunate interaction with a fan went viral:





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The Daily 202: Four reasons that even some Trump loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff

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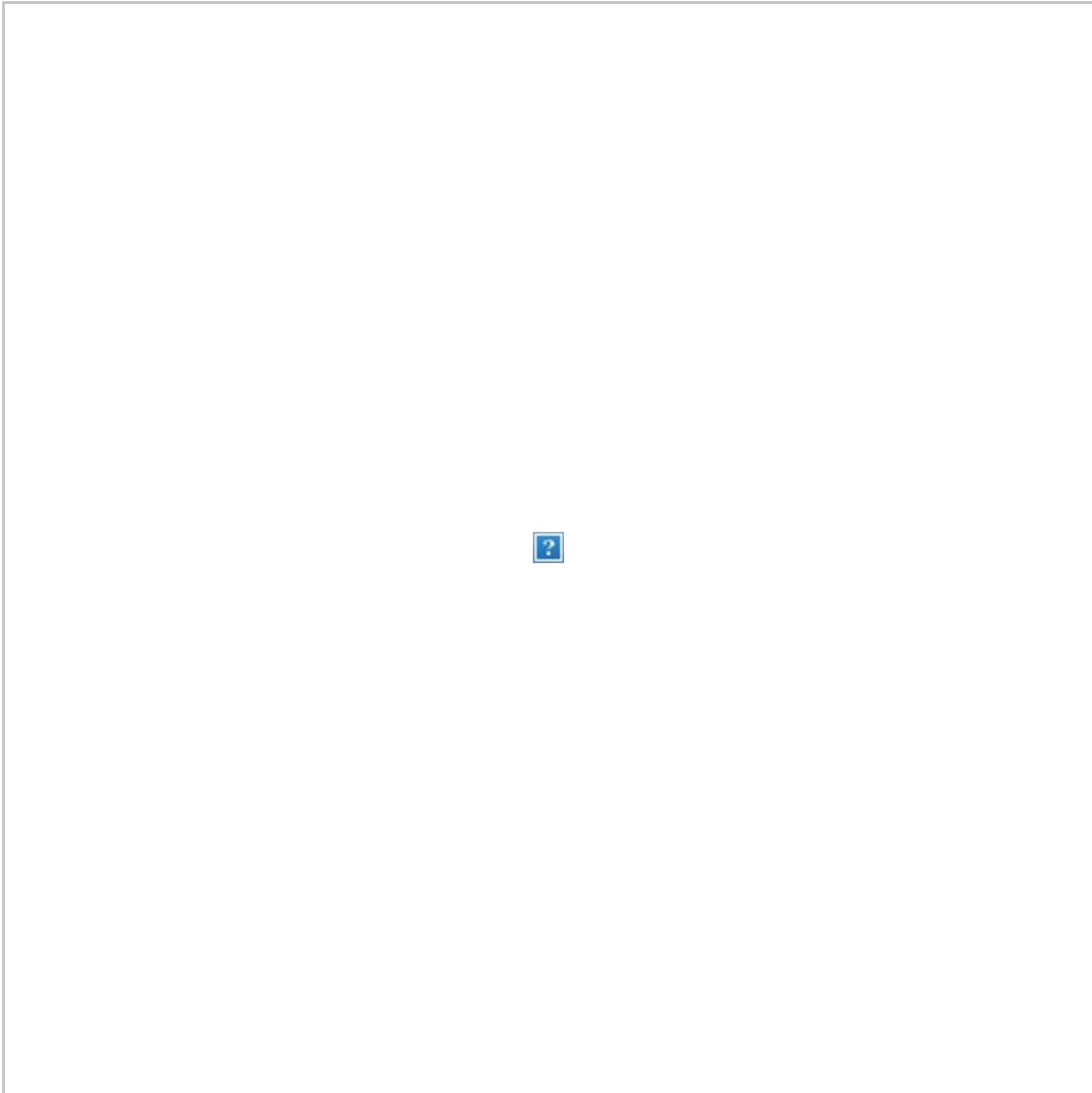
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# The Daily 202

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## Four reasons that even some Trump

# loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff



A look back at John Kelly's relationship with President Trump



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** There's a tweet for everything. "3 chiefs of staff in less than 3 years of being President," Donald Trump posted in 2012. "Part of the reason why

@BarackObama can't manage to pass his agenda."

But Barack Obama never had a problem finding talented people eager to take the job, and a 36-year-old certainly never snubbed the previous president the way that Nick Ayers did on Sunday. Now, with two months left in his second year, President Trump is back at square one as he searches for a third chief of staff.

**Advisers to Trump were "stunned" that Vice President Pence's chief turned down the chance to replace John Kelly**, claiming he wanted to spend more time with his family in Georgia, Maggie Haberman reports on the front page of the [New York Times](#): "One former senior administration official called it a humiliation for Mr. Trump and his adult children, an emotion that the president tries to avoid at all costs. ... Two people close to Mr. Trump said that a news release announcing Mr. Ayers's appointment had been drafted, and that the president had wanted to announce it as soon as possible."

-- **Who now?** "Trump's new list of potential chiefs includes Office of Management and Budget Director **Mick Mulvaney** ... and Rep. **Mark Meadows** (R-N.C.), a leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus," [per The Post's Felicia Sonmez, Josh Dawsey and Damian Paletta](#). "Acting Attorney General **Matthew G. Whitaker** and Trade Representative **Robert E. Lighthizer** were

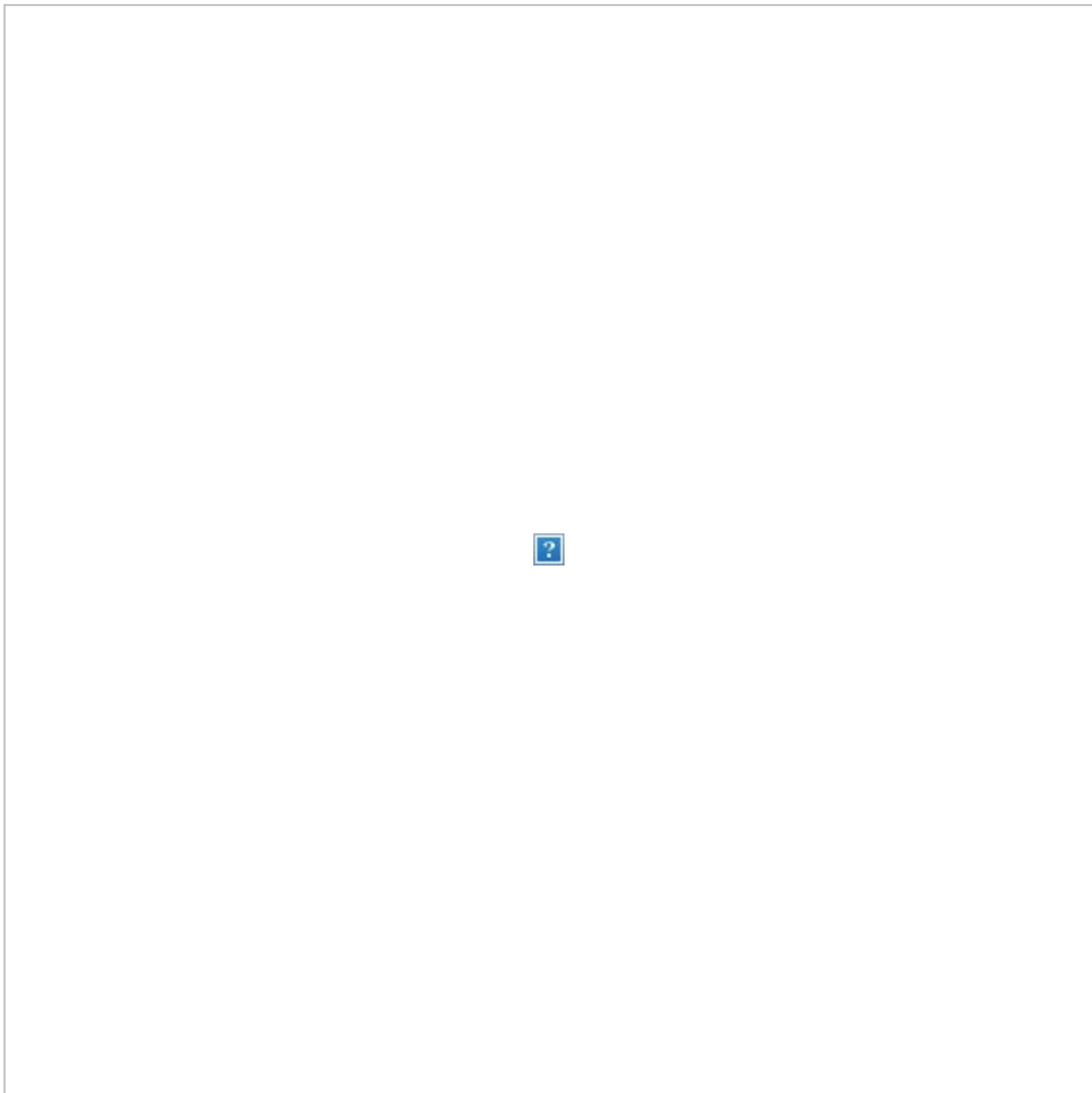
also said to be under consideration. But a senior administration official, who spoke privately and was not authorized to discuss the talks, said there was reluctance to move Lighthizer into the role [because] he is integral to negotiations with China over trade. Another senior administration official said that Mulvaney and Treasury Secretary **Steven Mnuchin** have both expressed internally that they aren't seeking the job but could change their minds if Trump pleads with them."

The [Associated Press](#) reports that Mulvaney is not interested in becoming chief of staff, citing a person close to him: "Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary. ... A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff. ... Trump's former deputy campaign manager, **David Bossie**, is also among the names being floated by some close to the White House. ... Pence's deputy chief of staff, Jarrod Agen, is expected to assume Ayers' role for the vice president."

"Former Gov. **Chris Christie** of New Jersey, who as a onetime United States attorney could help Mr. Trump in an impeachment fight, was also being mentioned," per the Times.

"In recent days, another name for chief of staff has

cropped up among Trump's advisers: **Wayne Berman**, senior managing director and head of global government affairs at the Blackstone Group," per [Politico](#). "Berman, who served as a top political aide at the Commerce Department under President George H.W. Bush, is close to Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, who remains one of Trump's closest confidants in the business world."



John Kelly, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and Nick Ayers listen as President Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting in March. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

**-- For anyone, under any president, this is a hard job with a Herculean learning curve. But there are four unique reasons that this position is especially foreboding for ambitious apparatchiks, even Trump loyalists.**

### **1) Ivanka cannot be managed.**

Kelly clashed constantly with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the president's daughter and son-in-law. They technically reported to him, but they had a direct channel to the president and maneuvered behind the scenes to replace him as chief.

"The couple told others privately that Kelly shared damaging stories about them and had not always served the president well," [Josh, Seung Min Kim and Phil Rucker reported](#) on Saturday. "For his part, Kelly joked that the couple was 'playing government,' and he said they should never have been brought into the White House — and that the pair thought they did not have to follow the traditional rules."

It's very hard, if not impossible, to manage your boss's kids. The power dynamic will always be challenging, no matter how clearly roles and responsibilities are delineated. This is why many public companies and agencies have nepotism rules.

Ayers had carefully cultivated an alliance with Javanka, who went to bat for him with Trump, even as other senior administration officials lobbied against him directly to the president. But then there's this wrinkle: Two sources tell [CNN](#) that one reason Ayers did not take the job was because of resistance from Melania Trump. The first lady has been more assertive recently, and she recently got the deputy national security adviser fired after a conflict that seemed to stem from a dispute over seating arrangements on a flight to Africa.

Just as in any West Wing, there are other competing power centers to worry about, as well. Then there's the 2020 reelection campaign, which will have offices in New York and Northern Virginia. There are also seemingly dozens of outside friends and advisers whom Trump phones regularly for advice.

The president has a long history, going back to his time managing Atlantic City casinos, of pitting staff against each other because he thinks it means he gets better advice and prevents anyone else from becoming too powerful. Remember the epic clashes between then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in 2016?





'Undisciplined, challenging individual': Tillerson opens up on working with Trump

## **2) Trump will not be managed.**

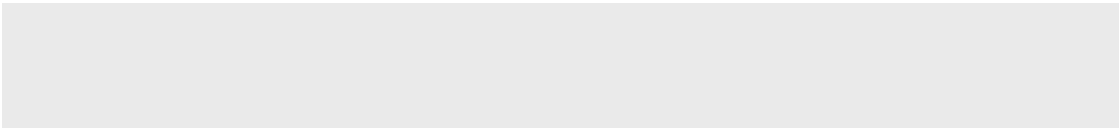
A chief of staff must manage both down and up, but the 72-year-old in the Oval Office seems pretty set in his habits. Trump also wants it both ways. He wants his White House to run “like a fine-tuned machine,” as he’s said it does, but – ever the showman – he also likes the reality TV vibe, where people are constantly left wondering where they stand and if they’ll get written off in

the next episode.

To put it mildly, Trump doesn't sweat the small stuff. Former secretary of state Rex Tillerson [described](#) some of his frustrations with advising an "undisciplined" president during an event in Houston last Thursday night. "What was challenging for me coming from the disciplined, highly process-oriented ExxonMobil corporation," Tillerson said, was "to go to work for a man who is pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things, but rather just kind of says, 'This is what I believe.' ... So often the president would say, 'Here's what I want to do, and here's how I want to do it' and I would have to say to him, 'Mr. President, I understand what you want to do, but you can't do it that way. It violates the law.' "

The president responded hours later by saying that he fired Tillerson because he "didn't have the mental capacity needed": "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell."

As far as the president is concerned, nothing is ever his fault. The guy in the adjacent office is a natural scapegoat, maybe even more so than whoever is at Foggy Bottom.





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## How to finance a cleaner planet

In 2018, Bank of America issued its fourth and largest green bond for \$2.25 billion. Learn more about this innovative way of financing a more sustainable future.





President Trump speaks on the phone in the Oval Office, joined by then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, Vice President Pence, senior adviser Steve Bannon, Communications Director Sean Spicer and national security adviser Michael Flynn. Only Pence, whose job is protected by the Constitution, remains. (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

**3) With so many storm clouds on the horizon, the odds are good that the next chief will need to retain his own lawyers.**

House Democrats get their gavels, and subpoena power, in just three weeks. Whoever gets this job will almost

certainly need to hire a personal attorney at some point with the White House under so much scrutiny from so many quarters, even if they do nothing wrong. [CNN](#) reported last week, for example, that Kelly responded to questions from special counsel Bob Mueller's team in recent months after initially resisting an interview.

No one but Trump fully knows how great his legal exposure might be on *L'Affaire Russe*. The president recently [defended](#) his efforts to make business deals with Russians tied to the Kremlin during the campaign – which he falsely, vigorously and repeatedly denied at the time – as “very legal & very cool.”

“The White House is adopting what one official termed a ‘shrugged shoulders’ strategy for the Mueller findings, calculating that most GOP base voters will believe whatever the president tells them to believe,” [Bob Costa and Rucker reported](#) in Sunday's paper. “But some allies fret that the president's coalition could crack apart under the growing pressure. Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump strategist who helped him navigate the most arduous phase of his 2016 campaign, predicted 2019 would be a year of ‘siege warfare’ and cast the president's inner circle as naively optimistic and unsophisticated. ... Rather than building a war room to manage the intersecting crises as past administrations have done, the Trump White House is understaffed, stuck in a bunker mentality and largely resigned to a plan to

wing it. Political and communications operatives are mostly taking their cues from the president and letting him drive the message with his spontaneous broadsides.”

Then there’s the specter of impeachment proceedings. Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), who will chair the House Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, used the I-word on the Sunday shows. Discussing the campaign finance violations laid out in the Friday court filings about longtime Trump consigliere Michael Cohen, Nadler told CNN’s Jake Tapper: “They would be impeachable offenses. Whether they’re important enough to justify an impeachment is a different question. But certainly, they’re impeachable offenses, because, even though they were committed before the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office.”

Don’t forget the economy. Some experts believe we’re headed for a slowdown, maybe even a [recession](#). The stock market has recently wiped out its 2018 gains, and investors are [no longer buying](#) on the dip the way they had been. A handshake agreement has led to a fragile détente in the trade war with China, but it could escalate again quickly. The Federal Reserve raising interest rates has drawn Trump’s ire, and the stimulus from last year’s tax cuts is running out.

Ayers reportedly plans to lead the pro-Trump super PAC

for 2020, which walls him off from some of the aforementioned drama. “Another factor,” per Haberman: “His ascension to the top West Wing job would have meant newfound scrutiny of his personal finances — last year he reported a net worth of \$12.2 million to \$54.8 million, a sizable sum for a political operative in his 30s who has amassed his own fortune. He accumulated his wealth partly through a web of political and consulting companies in which he has held ownership stakes.”



President Trump steps off Air Force One on July 28, 2017, after firing Reince Priebus via tweet. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

#### **4) The risk of public humiliation is high.**

Few who have gone into the administration at a senior level have emerged stronger from the experience. That's not how it usually works. Typically a top White House job ensures a lifetime of lucrative opportunities. Some ex-Trumpers have struggled to get good jobs on the outside.

Ayers wanted to hold the chief job for only a few months and then transition out, but the president wanted him to be available through 2020. One reason he reportedly wanted to be a short-timer is to avoid months of speculative stories about whether he was on the verge of being pushed out – indignities that both of Trump's chiefs suffered through.

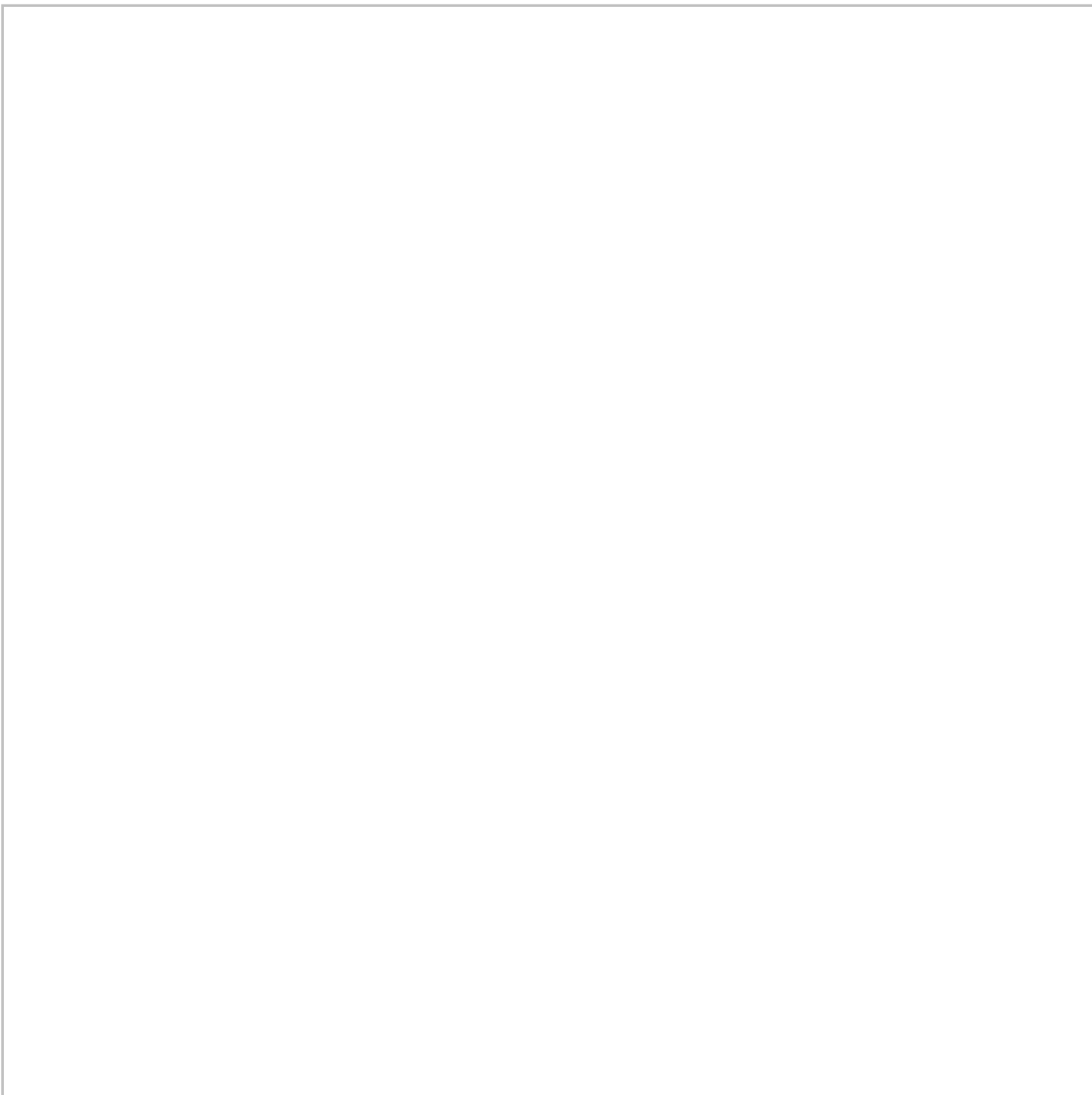
Trump unceremoniously ousted his first chief of staff Reince Priebus, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, on a rainy Friday night in July 2017. After Air Force One touched down at Andrews Air Force base, Priebus was sitting in a Suburban with senior policy adviser Stephen Miller and social media director Dan Scavino. When Trump tweeted that Kelly would replace him, Miller and Scavino hopped out of the vehicle. Priebus was left alone, and his Suburban [peeled away](#) from the motorcade – which continued onto the White House without him.



Priebus later debriefed Chris Whipple, the author of “The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency,” on the conflict and disarray in the White House. “Take everything you’ve heard and multiply it by 50,” Priebus told him for a piece that ran [in Vanity Fair](#).

“People mistake me for a laid-back guy from the Midwest,” he continued. “I’m much more aggressive, and much more of a knife fighter. Playing the inside game is what I do.”

But the knife fighter from Kenosha couldn’t avoid being stabbed in the back by his colleagues.



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Minerva Cisneros was killed by her partner, Arturo Sigala-Villavicencio, 28, on Christmas in 2015. (Ilana Panich-Linsman for The Washington Post)

## GET SMART FAST:

1. **Nearly half of women murdered over the past decade were killed by an intimate partner,** according to a Washington Post analysis. More than one-third of all men who killed an intimate partner were known to be a threat *before* the murder. ([Katie Zezima, Deanna Paul, Steven Rich, Julie Tate and](#)

[Jennifer Jenkins](#))

2. **An antitrust lawsuit alleging price-fixing in the generic-drug industry has expanded into an investigation of at least 16 companies and 300 drugs.** A federal prosecutor leading the probe described the industry as “most likely the largest cartel in the history of the United States.” ([Christopher Rowland](#))
3. **Former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn was indicted after allegations of financial wrongdoing.** Japanese prosecutors said that, over four years, Ghosn underreported his income by 50 percent. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
4. **A major winter storm caused power outages and flight cancellations in the Southeast.** States of emergency were declared in Virginia and North Carolina as nearly half a million people were left without power and the region's schools [announced](#) closures. ([Luz Lazo](#))
5. **Authorities are investigating a string of arson attacks targeting the worship centers of Jehovah’s Witnesses.** No motive has been uncovered for the attacks, which have already destroyed two of the pacifist religion’s worship centers. ([Cleve R. Wootson Jr.](#))

6. **Research shows 2018 has been the worst on record for gun violence in schools.** According to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 94 school shootings occurred this year — a 60-percent increase from the previous high of 59 set in 2006. ([the Guardian](#))
7. **The first U.S. teachers strike against a charter school operator came to a close in Chicago.** More than 500 teachers will return to work today after reaching an agreement with Acero schools on pay raises and the school calendar. ([Associated Press](#))
8. **NPR's reliance on temporary workers has prompted complaints of exploitation.** NPR's union said between 20 and 22 percent of the public broadcaster's union-covered newsroom are temp workers, making it an outlier among broadcast media organizations. ([Paul Farhi](#))
9. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a holiday-themed reminder not to eat raw cookie dough.** The agency warned that flour is a “raw agricultural product” and can contain bacteria linked to E. coli. ([Newsweek](#))



President Trump speaks with California officials as they view damage from the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

## **THE PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES:**

**-- The Trump administration opposed a move to endorse a dire report on climate change at a United Nations conference in Poland. [David Nakamura and Darryl Fears report](#): “Arguments erupted Saturday night before a United Nations working group focused on science and technology, where **the United States****

**teamed with Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait** to challenge language that would have welcomed the findings of the landmark report, which said that the world has barely 10 years to cut carbon emissions by nearly half to avoid catastrophic warming. ‘There was going to be an agreement to welcome the . . . report,’ said Jake Schmidt, the managing director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s international program, who is in Poland. ‘The U.S. wanted to ‘note’ it, which is saying in essence that we know it’s out there but we have no comment.’”

**-- Bowing to pressure from antiabortion groups, the Trump administration halted a government-run study using fetal tissue to try to find a cure for HIV.** [Amy Goldstein and Lenny Bernstein report](#): “A senior scientist at a National Institutes of Health laboratory in Montana told colleagues that the Health and Human Services Department ‘has directed me to discontinue procuring fetal tissue’ from a firm that is the only available source, according to an email he sent to a collaborator in late September. **‘This effectively stops all of our research to discover a cure for HIV,’ the researcher wrote.** The research disruptions might extend to a handful of other labs using fetal tissue, all of which are part of NIH ... **The shutdown of the HIV research at the federal lab in Montana ... was never disclosed publicly by government officials, who have forbidden affected researchers from discussing what happened.**”

**-- Trump's trade war, as well as developments in the Russia investigation, is creating market volatility.**

[From the New York Times's Matt Phillips](#): "The trade war has already taken a toll on large chunks of the global economy. China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, is growing at its slowest rate in nearly a decade. The export-driven economies of Japan and Germany — the third and fourth biggest economies in the world, respectively — both contracted in the third quarter. The United States has so far been an outlier. ... But even in the United States, there are emerging pockets of weakness, particularly in parts of the economy that are sensitive to rising borrowing costs."

**-- The possibility of a partial government shutdown next week still looms. [The New York Times's Julie](#)**

[Hirschfeld Davis and Emily Cochrane report](#): "The deepest impasse — and the one with the greatest potential to prompt a year-end breakdown — is over Mr. Trump's demand for \$5 billion for a wall on the United States' southern border. ... Mr. Trump is set to host [Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi] at the White House on Tuesday for a meeting that will test the new dynamic between a president weakened by midterm election losses and empowered Democrats working to define their party for the era of divided government. ... Beyond the wall fight and the bare-minimum endeavor of keeping the government fully open, a perennial year-end appetite for



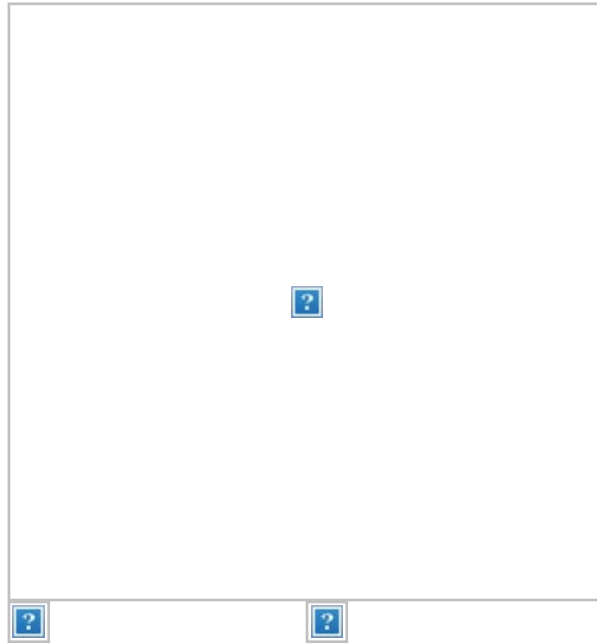
legislating has taken hold on Capitol Hill.”

**-- Trump has reversed his support for a cut in defense spending. [Politico's Wesley Morgan reports](#):**

“Trump has told Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to submit a \$750 billion budget proposal for fiscal 2020 ... The \$750 billion figure emerged from a meeting Tuesday at the White House among Trump, Mattis and the Republican chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees ... That would dwarf the \$733 billion budget proposal Mattis and other top military leaders have been fighting to preserve and would represent a stunning about-face for a president who recently called the fiscal 2019 top line of \$716 billion for defense spending ‘crazy.’”

**-- A growing number of incoming lawmakers, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), are casting a spotlight on how Capitol Hill treats its interns and staffers. [Elise Viebeck reports](#):** “When [Ocasio-Cortez] said last week that she would not only pay her interns, but also provide more than the minimum wage, the news had an immediate impact. ... Congress performs terribly on metrics related to staff diversity, workplace protections and employee pay and benefits. Advocates warn that the system is built to accept only the most privileged young people — often white, moneyed and with connections — who later fill the pipeline for Washington’s political and business establishment. The system has gone unchallenged for years. But scrutiny by

Ocasio-Cortez and her peers after the recent midterm elections is stirring hopes that Capitol Hill might be ready for change.”





Inside the filings: Court documents reveal new contact between Trump's inner circle and Russian

## **THERE'S A BEAR IN THE WOODS:**

**-- Records show at least 14 Trump associates had contact with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign and presidential transition. [Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Carol D. Leonnig report](#): “Again and again and again, over the course of [Trump’s] 18-month campaign for the presidency, Russian citizens made contact with his closest family**

members and friends, as well as figures on the periphery of his orbit. Some offered to help his campaign and his real estate business. Some offered dirt on his Democratic opponent. Repeatedly, Russian nationals suggested Trump should hold a peacemaking sit-down with Vladimir Putin — and offered to broker such a summit. ... [T]he mounting number of communications that have been revealed occurred against the backdrop of ‘sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the U.S. presidential election,’ as [Bob] Mueller’s prosecutors wrote in a court filing last week."

**-- Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen will be sentenced on Wednesday, as federal prosecutors in Manhattan appear to shift their focus toward the Trump Organization’s possible participation in campaign-finance violations. [The New York Times’s Ben Protess, William K. Rashbaum and Maggie Haberman report](#):** “Mr. Cohen, Mr. Trump’s self-described fixer, has provided assistance in that inquiry, which is separate from the investigation by the special counsel ... In addition to implicating Mr. Trump in the payments to the two women, Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that the company’s chief financial officer was involved in discussions about them, a claim that is now a focus of the inquiry, according to [people briefed on the matter] ...

**“Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that he believes Mr. Trump personally approved the company’s decision**

**to reimburse him for one of the payments.** ... [T]here is no indication that anyone at the company will face charges in connection with the inquiry. But in recent weeks, the prosecutors contacted the company to renew a request they had made this year for documents and other materials ... The precise nature of the materials sought was unclear, but the renewed request is further indication that prosecutors continue to focus on the president's company even as the case against Mr. Cohen comes to a close."

**-- Legal experts remain divided on whether a sitting president can be indicted, a question that will carry great weight for Trump moving forward.** [The AP's Michael Balsamo reports](#): "The Supreme Court has never ruled on whether the president can be indicted or whether the president can be subpoenaed for testimony. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which provides legal advice and guidance to executive branch agencies, has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted. Two Justice Department reports, one in 1973 and one in 2000, came to the same conclusion. Those reports essentially concluded that the president's responsibilities are so important that an indictment would pose too many risks for the government to function properly. Trump's lawyers have said that [Mueller] plans to adhere to that guidance, though Mueller's office has never independently confirmed that."

**-- Conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi sued Mueller for alleged constitutional violations and leaking grand jury secrets.** [Politico's Josh Gerstein reports](#): "Corsi's new suit against Mueller also accuses the special prosecutor of trying to badger Corsi into giving false testimony that he served as a conduit between Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to then-candidate [Trump]. ... Corsi is demanding \$100 million in actual damages and \$250 million in punitive damages for injury to his reputation."

**-- Former White House counsel John Dean said the details revealed in Mueller's court filings give Congress "little choice" but to start impeachment proceedings.** "I don't know that this will forever disappear into some dark hole of unprosecutable presidents," Dean said. "I think it will resurface in the Congress. I think what this totality of [Friday's] filings show that the House is going to have little choice, the way this is going, other than to start impeachment proceedings." ([Michael Brice-Saddler](#))



Are new Russia probe findings a dire sign for Trump? Lawmakers weigh in.

**-- Republican lawmakers defended Trump on the Sunday shows amid his escalating legal troubles.**

[Felicia Sonmez and Ariana Eunjung Cha report](#): “In an interview on NBC News’s ‘Meet the Press,’ Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) played down the alleged campaign finance violations detailed by prosecutors, arguing that such missteps should not be ‘over-criminalized.’ ... He added that if campaign finance violations are aggressively prosecuted, ‘we’re going to become a banana republic,

where every president gets prosecuted and every president gets thrown in jail when they're done with office.' ... Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said Sunday on CBS News's 'Face the Nation' that 'there's no reason to not stand by anybody in this moment,' drawing a distinction between individuals who have been accused of crimes and pleaded guilty and others, presumably Trump."

**-- But Rubio added that, if Trump chooses to pardon Manafort, it could "trigger a debate" about overhauling pardon powers.** "I don't believe that any pardons should be used with relation to these particular cases, frankly," Rubio said on [ABC News](#). "Not only does it not pass the smell test, I just think it undermines the reason why we have presidential pardons in the first place, and I think, in fact, that if something like that were to happen, it could trigger a debate about whether the pardon powers should be amended given these circumstances, so I hope that they don't do that. It would be a terrible mistake if they did."

**-- And Rand voiced concerns about Trump's attorney general nominee, William Barr.** [Sonmez reports](#): "'I'm concerned that he's been a big supporter of the Patriot Act, which lowered the standard for spying on Americans. And he even went so far as to say, you know, the Patriot Act was pretty good, but we should go much further.' ... Paul said that while he hasn't made a decision on Barr, 'I



can tell you, the first things that I've learned about him being for more surveillance of Americans is very, very troubling.”



Former FBI director James Comey goes through security as he arrives to testify before the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees on Capitol Hill. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Former FBI director Jim Comey dodged many questions from House lawmakers about the bureau's 2016 investigations, often citing overlap with**

**Mueller's probe.** [Karoun Demirjian and Matt Zapotosky report](#): “Republicans from the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees peppered Comey with questions about the FBI’s investigation into former secretary of state Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server, including whether Comey would have dismissed former officials Peter Strzok and Lisa Page from the probe had he known they were exchanging texts disparaging [Trump]. Comey said he probably would have. However, the former director repeatedly declined to answer questions seeking detailed answers about elements of the FBI’s Russia investigation, which Comey either could not recall — such as who prepared the document launching the bureau’s counterintelligence investigation of individuals affiliated with Trump — or thought came too close to [Mueller’s investigation].”

**-- An FBI official who accompanied Comey for his testimony at one point confirmed Mueller is investigating Trump’s possible obstruction of justice.** [The Atlantic’s Andrew Kragie reports](#): “The moment came as Representative Trey Gowdy, the retiring South Carolina Republican who grew famous for leading a Benghazi investigation, was asking Comey whether he considered a Justice Department memo sufficient grounds for Trump to fire him. The FBI official, Cecilia Bessee, interrupted Gowdy: ‘Mr. Chairman, to the extent that question goes—again, goes to the special counsel’s investigation into obstruction, the witness will not be able

to answer.’”

**-- Speaking to an audience in New York last night, Comey implored American voters to end Trump’s presidency by electing a Democrat in 2020. [CNN’s Gregory Krieg reports](#): “All of us should use every breath we have to make sure the lies stop on January 20, 2021,’ Comey told an audience at the 92nd Street Y on New York City’s Upper East Side. He all but begged Democrats to set aside their ideological differences and nominate the person best suited to defeating Trump in an election. ‘I understand the Democrats have important debates now over who their candidate should be,’ Comey told MSNBC’s Nicolle Wallace, ‘but they have to win. They have to win.’ ... Asked if Trump might be an unindicted co-conspirator in some of the crimes recently described by [Mueller], Comey said he didn’t know, ‘but if he’s not there, he’s certainly close.’”**

**-- Robby Mook, who managed Hillary Clinton’s campaign, has an I-told-you-so [op-ed for Monday’s Post](#) that outlines just how much was publicly known about Trump’s ties to Russia before the election: “Obviously, much more evidence about Russia’s interference has come out since 2016. But I’m not sure we’ve learned the bigger lesson: Why did it take two years and dozens of indictments for so many to believe that Russia was not only behind the DNC hack but may also have been in cahoots with the Trump campaign,**

when there was so much evidence at the time? It's as if something needs to be secret or hidden to truly matter. If it's sealed in a courtroom, it must be a bombshell, but if it's out in the open, it's just not as serious. **Trump will not be the last of his kind. The next time so much evidence about a candidate is sitting out in plain view, let's hope it gets a good look before Americans cast their votes."**



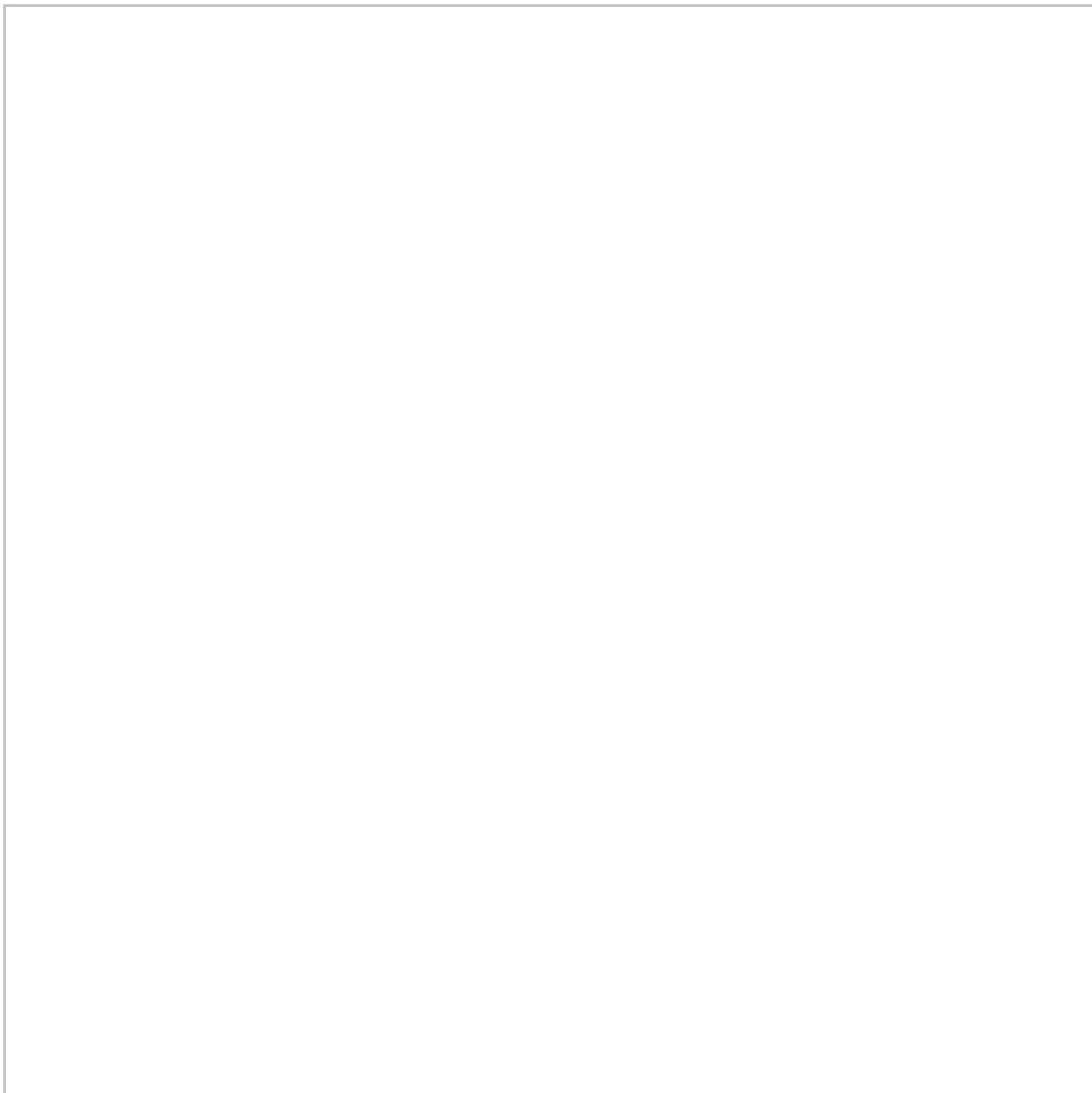
**MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- Wisconsin's Democratic governor-elect suggested he may pursue legal challenges against Republicans' lame-duck legislation. [Felicia Sonmez reports](#):** “‘I’m not making any promises one way or the other, but we’re looking at all issues, all options on the table,’ [Gov.-elect Tony Evers] said ... ‘I need to stand up for the people of Wisconsin. There’s 2.6 million people that voted in this last election, and they expect me to do that. So we’re going to pursue this.’ Evers said that he has urged Gov. Scott Walker (R) to veto the bills but that Walker was ‘noncommittal.’ Walker has previously signaled support for the measures.”

**-- The House Democratic caucus will be divided between progressives trying to push their party to the left and moderates looking for common ground with Republicans, a combination that could complicate their efforts to pass legislation. [Bloomberg News's Sahil Kapur reports](#):** “How Speaker-in-waiting Nancy Pelosi manages the tension, which is already on display, will frame the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination race, as the House will serve as the party’s main power center to advance its agenda and draw contrasts with [Trump]. Messy battles between the party’s factions risk undercutting Democrats hopes of rallying to defeat Trump in the next election, potentially costing them the chance to define the political debate and highlight favorable issues.”

**-- Now that all the midterm elections have officially concluded, Dave Weigel writes that Republicans have a clear path to regaining the House majority in 2020.**

[From Weigel](#): “[The number of] House Democrats in Trump districts: 30, up from 13 before the election, though it will tick up to 31 if a special election is called in North Carolina's 9th District and Republicans don't win. ... You don't have to squint to see a path back to a Republican majority in 2020; winning a little more than half of these seats would do that. But the flipped districts fall into two distinct categories. In 10 districts, Trump ran weaker than Mitt Romney had in 2012, while in the other 20, he ran stronger.”



Beto O'Rourke greets supporters following a rally in Austin. (Nick Wagner/Austin American-Statesman/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Early voting in California and Texas could fundamentally alter the Democratic primaries in 2020.** [NBC News's Alex Seitz-Wald reports](#): "A little over a year from now, millions of Californians will be mailed their ballots on the same day that Iowans head to their famous first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses. They could start

mailing them back before New Hampshire holds its first-in-the-nation primary in 2020. Meanwhile, Texans will likely have a chance to vote early, too — even before Nevada and South Carolina, which typically round out the earliest portion of the primary calendar. The explosion of early voting and reshuffling of the primary calendar in 2020 could transform the Democratic presidential nominating contest, potentially diminishing the power of the traditional, tiny and homogeneous early states in favor of much larger and more diverse battlegrounds. That would be a boon to the best-known candidates with war chests sizable enough to compete in big states early. And it would empower black and Hispanic voters in large, multiracial states like California, which was a virtual afterthought at the back of the primary calendar in 2016.”

**-- Nebraska Democrats decided to return to a primary system for 2020 rather than hold another caucus. [The Omaha World-Herald's Roseann Moring and Micah Mertes report](#):** “The state’s Democrats had been choosing their presidential nominee by caucus since 2008 in a system similar to Iowa’s. ... But Nebraska Democratic Party’s State Central Committee voted at its meeting in Ord on Saturday to discontinue the system and go back to regular primary voting. The change was overwhelmingly approved on a voice vote following about 90 minutes of debate. Critics of the caucuses cited the several-hour investment that voters have to make and said it could decrease turnout in the May primary, when



nominees for other offices are chosen.”

**-- Potential Democratic candidates are worried about how Beto O'Rourke could shake up the 2020 race if he chooses to run. [The New York Times's Matt Flegenheimer and Jonathan Martin report](#):** “[O'Rourke] has emerged as the wild card of the presidential campaign-in-waiting for a Democratic Party that lacks a clear 2020 front-runner. ... Advisers to other prospective Democratic candidates for 2020 acknowledge that Mr. O'Rourke is worthy of their concern. His record-setting success with small donors would test the grass-roots strength of progressives like Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. His sometimes saccharine call to summon the nation's better angels would compete with the likely pitch of Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. And his appeal to some former Obama advisers — and, potentially, his electoral coalition of young people, women and often infrequent voters — could complicate a possible run for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who would aim to win back many of his former boss's constituencies.”

**-- Elizabeth Warren's aides have started looking for a campaign headquarters in the Boston area. [Politico's Natasha Korecki reports](#):** “Warren has the core of her 2020 team in place if she runs for president. ... All that's left is for her to give the green light. When and if she does, she'll be rolling out arguably the most advanced

and sweeping infrastructure in the Democratic field, a plug-and-play campaign that could give her a massive head start on nearly every contender in the burgeoning primary roster, with only Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) coming close.”

**-- Technology is transforming how potential 2020 candidates present themselves to voters. [Michael](#)**

[Scherer reports](#): “The 2020 campaign ... will take place in a media landscape that has shifted in just the past two years and been radically transformed since the 2008 primary, which began before the release of the first iPhone. Iowa hay bale speeches and cable news primary debates will still play a role. But Democratic strategists say the quest to capture the attention of Democrats online, through social streams and viral sharing that exude a sense of immediacy and authenticity, could dominate the early months in a crowded field, as energized voters subscribe and swipe in search of a candidate match.”



People rally at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington to protest the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

## THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- A transcript of Jamal Khashoggi's killing revealed the Post contributing columnist's final words: "I can't breathe." [CNN's Nic Robertson reports](#): "[One] source, who has read a translated transcript of an audio recording of Khashoggi's painful last moments, said it was clear that the killing on October 2 was no botched rendition

attempt, but the execution of a premeditated plan to murder the journalist. During the course of the gruesome scene, the source describes Khashoggi struggling against a group of people determined to kill him. 'I can't breathe,' Khashoggi says. 'I can't breathe.' 'I can't breathe.' The transcript notes the sounds of Khashoggi's body being dismembered by a saw, as the alleged perpetrators are advised to listen to music to block out the sound. And, according to the source, the transcript suggests that a series of phone calls are made, briefing them on progress."

**-- British Prime Minister Theresa May was criticized as a traitor days before a Parliament vote on her Brexit deal. [William Booth reports](#):** "[A] march was called by the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), a once-ascendant movement now in decline, dominated by 'Euroskeptics' and right-wing populists. They were at the forefront of the winning Brexit campaign two years ago ... Now the Ukipers and their allies at the rally say they are being double-crossed by 'the establishment,' aided by a 'seditious BBC,' and a deep state of pro-Europe civil servants and global capitalists led by May. In the crowd, one man held aloft a gallows with a hangman's noose. Others shouted that May should be 'taken to the Tower,' the medieval palace-prison where Henry VIII had his wives killed."

**-- The Brexit deal is widely expected to be defeated,**

**which will probably set off a flurry of last-minute negotiations to avoid some of the most dire consequences of the country's withdrawal from the European Union.** [Michael Birnbaum reports](#): “Europeans have gone slackjawed at London’s political chaos, with normally demure diplomats comparing the process there to a slow-motion car wreck. They say they can offer little other than cosmetic tweaks that might help May save face with her own Conservative Party. And they have begun to accelerate their emergency planning to prepare safety nets that could avoid some of the humanitarian and economic chaos that might happen if Britain crashes out of the European Union on its deadline of March 29, with no other plan in place.”

**-- France has opened an investigation into possible Russian involvement with the country’s Yellow Vest protests.** [Bloomberg News’s Carol Matlack and Robert Williams report](#): “According to the Alliance for Securing Democracy, about 600 Twitter accounts known to promote Kremlin views have begun focusing on France, boosting their use of the hashtag #giletsjaunes, the French name for the Yellow Vest movement. French security services are looking at the situation, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Sunday in a radio interview with RTL.”

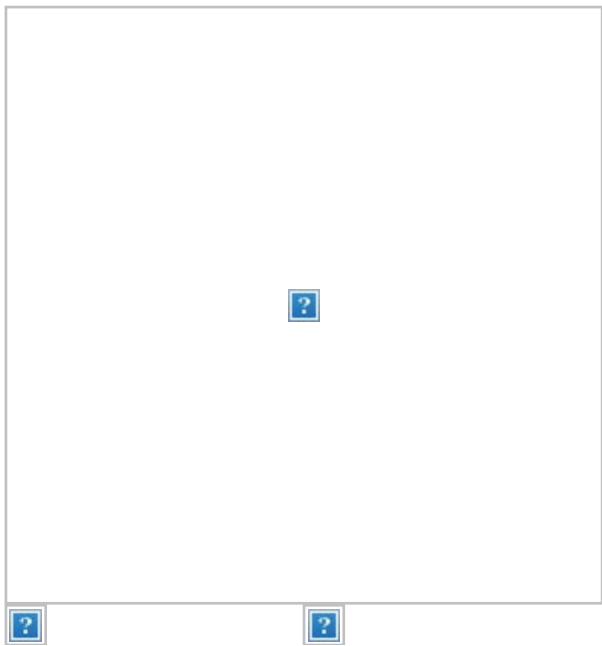
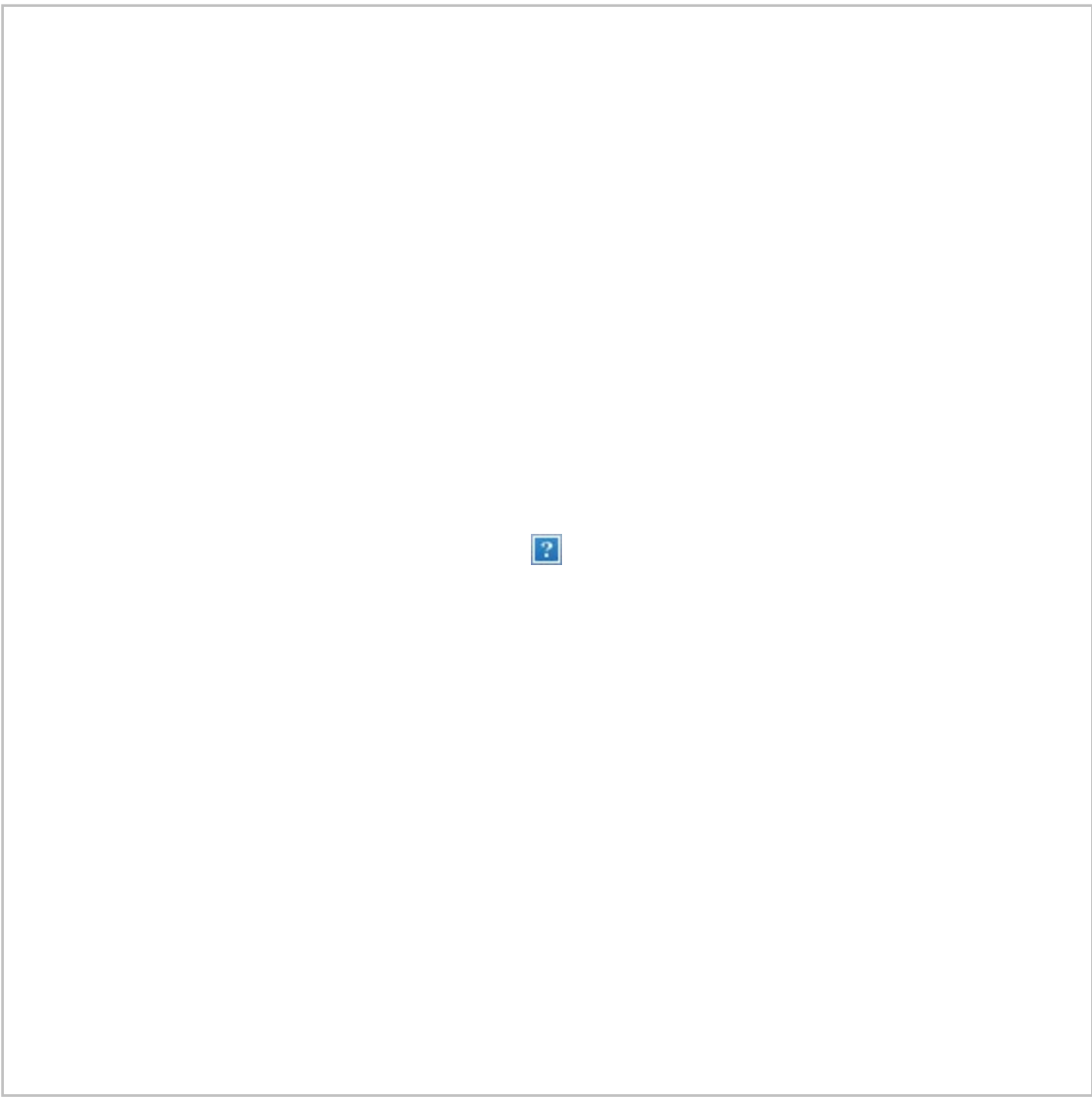
**SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

Trump dismissed a possible campaign-finance violation as a “simple private transaction.”



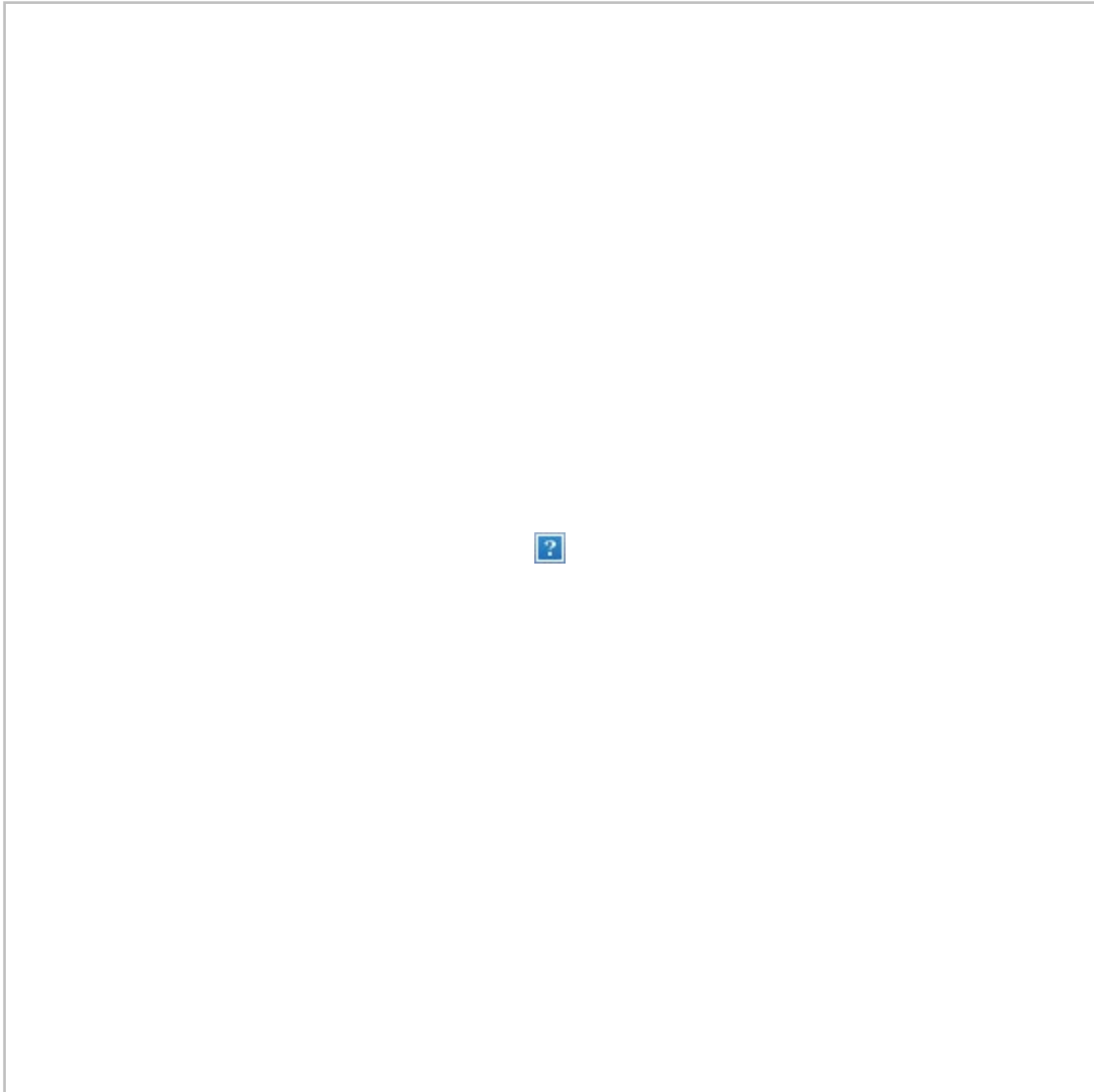


And he downplayed the chief of staff drama:





D.C. Twitter was dominated by buzz about Kelly, Ayers and the chief of staff search. From a CNN reporter:



Jeb Bush's former communications director cast doubt on the official storyline surrounding Ayers not getting the job:



Ayers confirmed he'll leave the White House at the end of the month:



From a Los Angeles Times editor:



A former spokesman for Hillary Clinton mocked Trump's search for a chief of staff:



A Democratic congresswoman called on Kelly to apologize:



An MSNBC producer listed the many departures so far from the Trump administration:

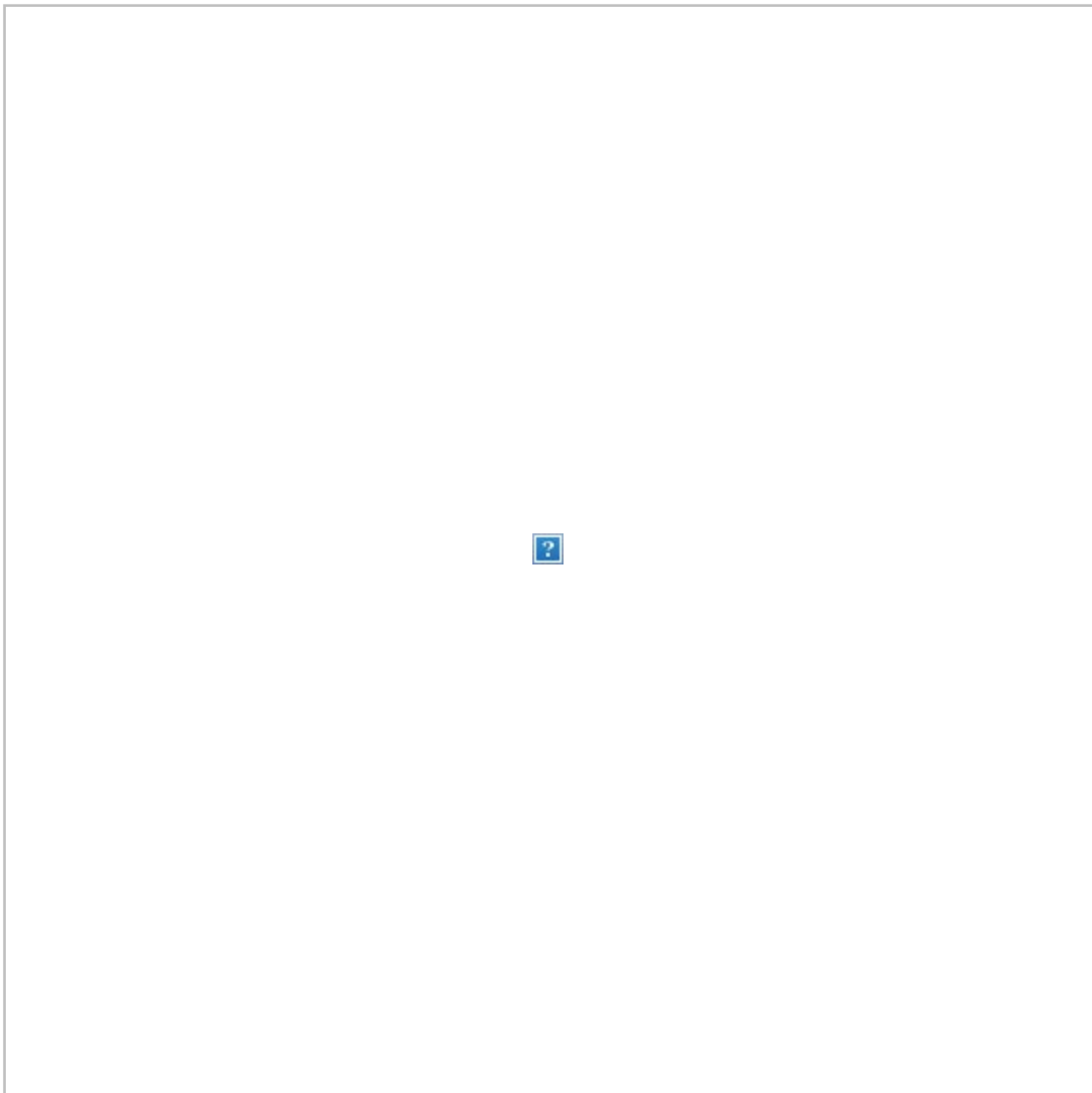


Trump once again blamed the "Fake News Media" for negative coverage of his administration:



A former spokesman for Obama's Justice Department reflected on reports that prosecutors are weighing charging Trump for campaign-finance violations if he loses reelection:





A Bloomberg News reporter noted GOP lawmakers who have previously voted for impeachment:



A former Trump campaign adviser promoted a conspiracy theory about how federal agents obtained a FISA warrant on him:



A former FBI agent responded with context on the requirements for a FISA warrant:



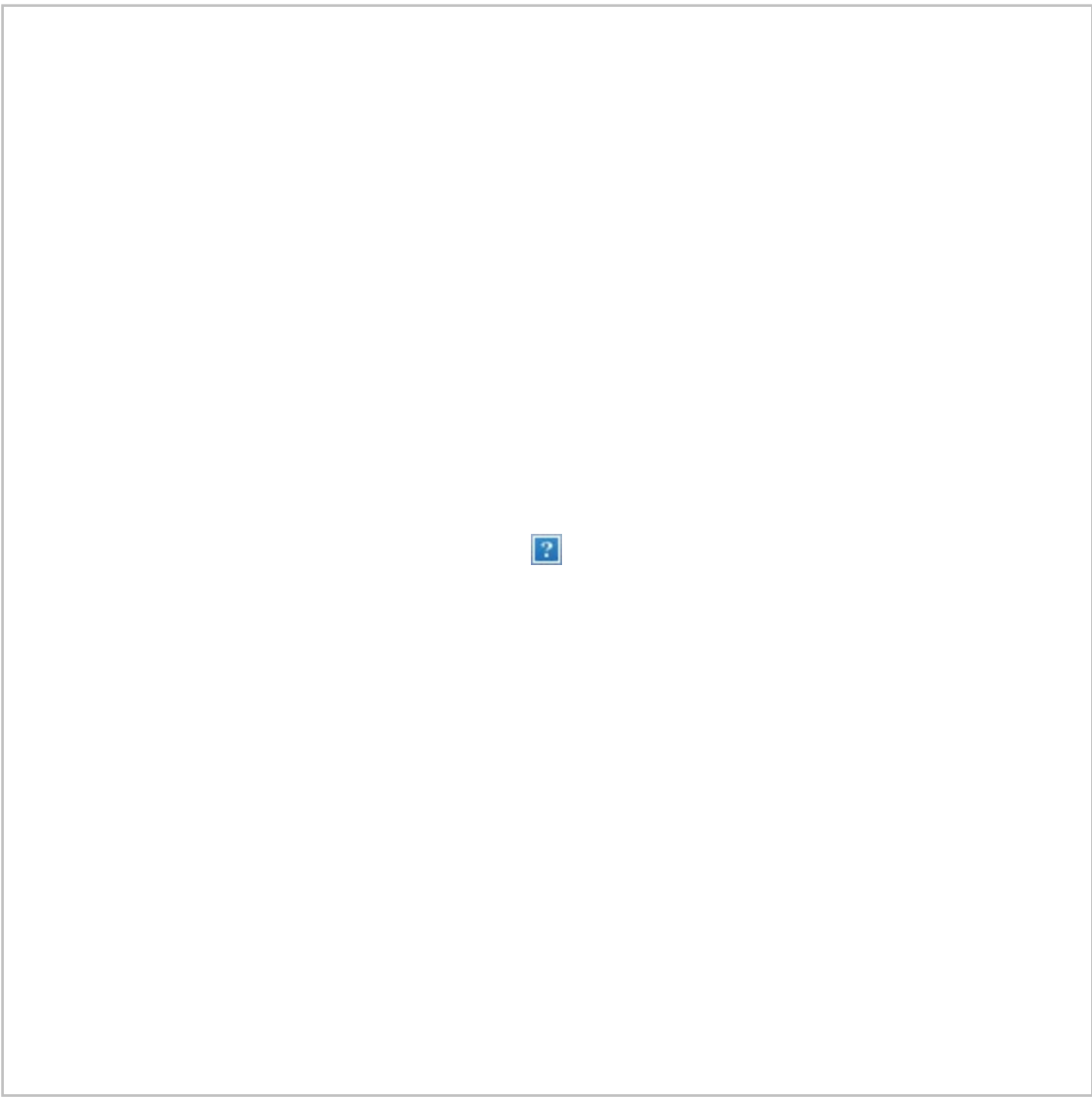
Papadopoulos replied:

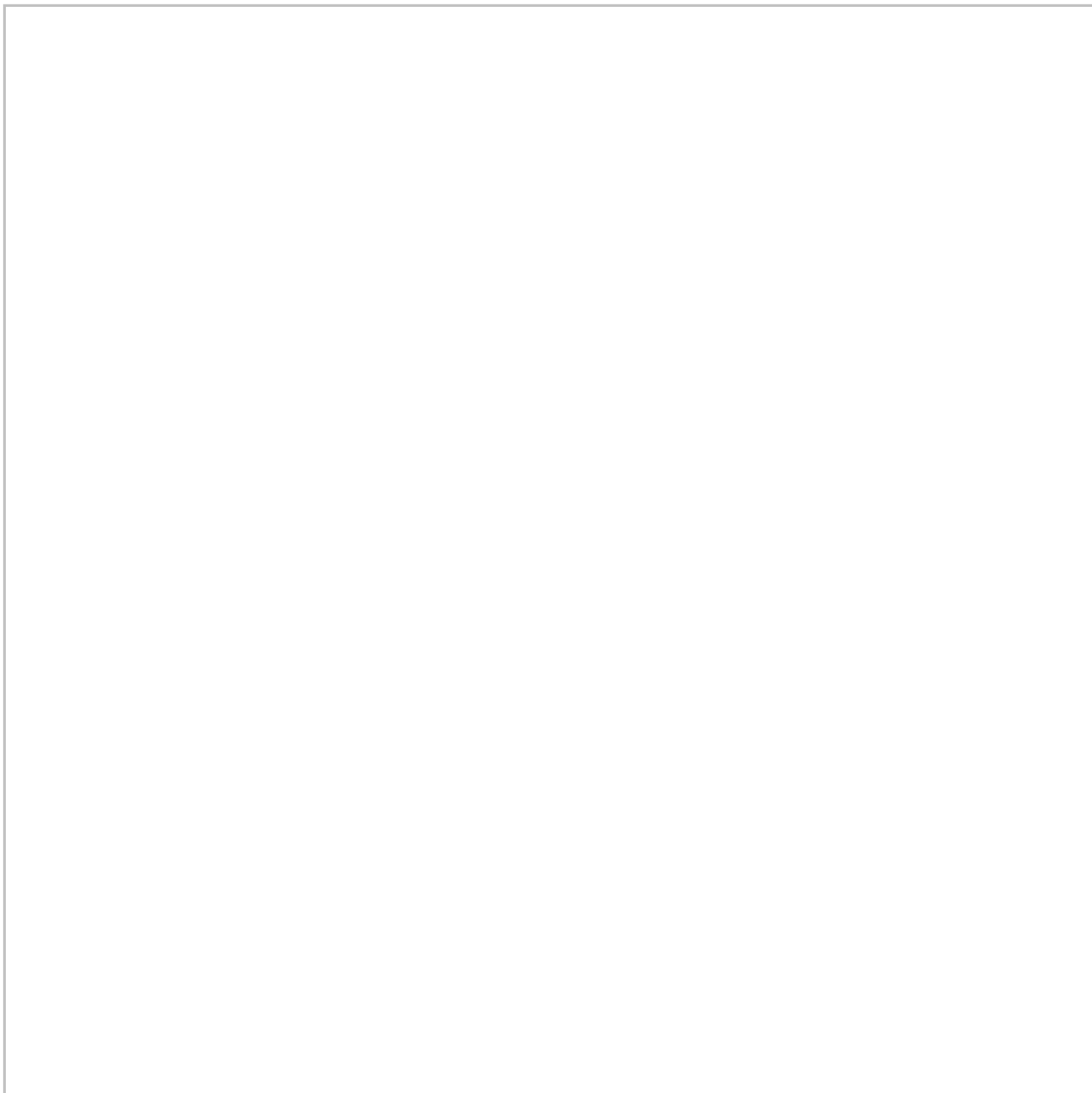


A Democratic congresswoman-elect reacted to a Weekly Standard reporter's criticism:



But the reporter then apologized, allowing for a rare moment of Twitter forgiveness:



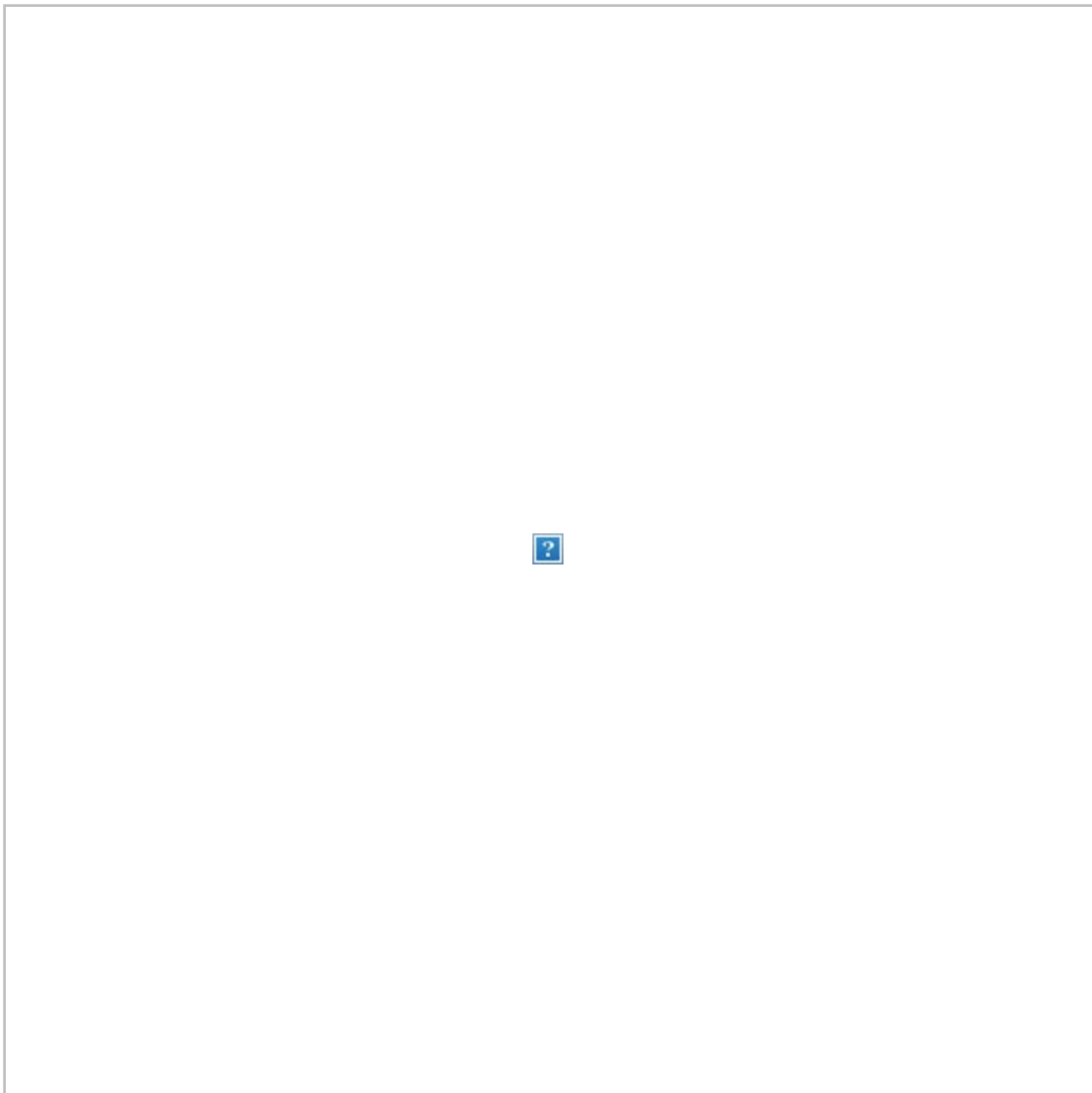


Michelle Obama retweeted a story about a young girl dressing up like the former first lady for her school's Cultural Heroes Day:





An NPR host commented on his employer's reliance on temps:



And a former Obama administration official highlighted an important panel on MSNBC:



## GOOD READS:

-- **[“Meet Melania Trump’s enforcer. It’s not her husband,”](#)** by **Sarah Ellison**: “Staffers in [Trump’s] White House are measured by longevity. There’s the November 9th Club, the nickname for those who joined after Trump won the election. There are those who joined the campaign earlier, but only after he secured the nomination. And there are a few who came on board when his campaign was largely viewed as a joke by the

GOP establishment — and everyone else. Few in Trump's White House have a history with him that dates as far back as Stephanie Grisham. For nearly two years, she served as communications director for first lady Melania Trump. A few weeks ago, she received a promotion to deputy chief of staff for communications and has become one of the more powerful figures in the ever-evolving Trump White House. Back in the summer of 2015, she was a lowly press wrangler on Trump's campaign."

-- New York Times, "[What Straight-A Students Get Wrong](#)," by Adam Grant: "The evidence is clear: Academic excellence is not a strong predictor of career excellence. Across industries, research shows that the correlation between grades and job performance is modest in the first year after college and trivial within a handful of years. ... Academic grades rarely assess qualities like creativity, leadership and teamwork skills, or social, emotional and political intelligence. Yes, straight-A students master cramming information and regurgitating it on exams. But career success is rarely about finding the right solution to a problem — it's more about finding the right problem to solve."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**"Suffering pickaxes**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Miami's 'big bad**

and dog poop, Trump's Hollywood star has become a symbolic spectacle," from Rob Kuznia: "Since Trump announced his campaign for the Oval Office in 2015, his Walk of Fame star has been a constant source of conflict and spectacle. The pink pentagram has been destroyed twice, obliterated by a pickax two weeks before the 2016 election and again this past July. It has been a regular target of lesser vandalism: stomping, spitting and dog-pooing. It has been scrawled with pejoratives and spray-painted with swastikas. On Sept.

she-wolf' finishes a 29-year run in Congress," from the Miami Herald: "As Miami's longest-tenured congresswoman [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen] finishes out her final weeks in office, there's still plenty of work to do. Her bill that would limit U.S. loans to the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega until he carries out democratic reforms passed the U.S. Senate, though it still needs final passage in the House of Representatives and [Trump's] signature. Another bill named in her honor would authorize defense and security

20, a few weeks after the shattered star was replaced, a street artist covered it with bars resembling a jail cell. This has become ground zero for the West Coast's grass-roots war over the Trump presidency, a sidewalk attraction for pro- and anti-Trumpers alike. ... Installed in 2007, Trump's star has been guarded by fake Russian soldiers, crowned by a golden toilet and enclosed by a mini-wall lined with mock barbed wire."

spending assistance for Israel, and it has an uncertain fate in the final weeks of this year's Congress. Though Ros-Lehtinen is leaving office, her anti-communist worldview, inspired by a childhood in Cuba, lives on through dozens of former staffers and associates who occupy positions of power in government, notably Sen. Marco Rubio, a former intern. The legacy of her outsized influence on foreign policy and Latin American affairs will continue long after she leaves elected office."

**DAYBOOK:**

**Trump** will have lunch with **Pence**. He has no other events on his public schedule.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:**

**“I think you are beyond the stage that led to the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton, whether or not you think that that was worthy of impeachment.” – Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) on Mueller’s latest court filings. ([ABC News](#))**

**NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington will see a lot of sunshine Monday to partly make up for the cold weather. [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “Sunday’s southern storm gradually pulls away from the North Carolina coast and sunshine returns in its wake. Despite the sun, chilly breezes (around 10 mph) from the north hold high temperatures to the low 40s.”**

**-- The Redskins lost to the Giants 40-16, further hurting the team’s slim playoff chances. ([Les Carpenter](#))**

**-- Supporters of Initiative 77 are scrambling to collect**

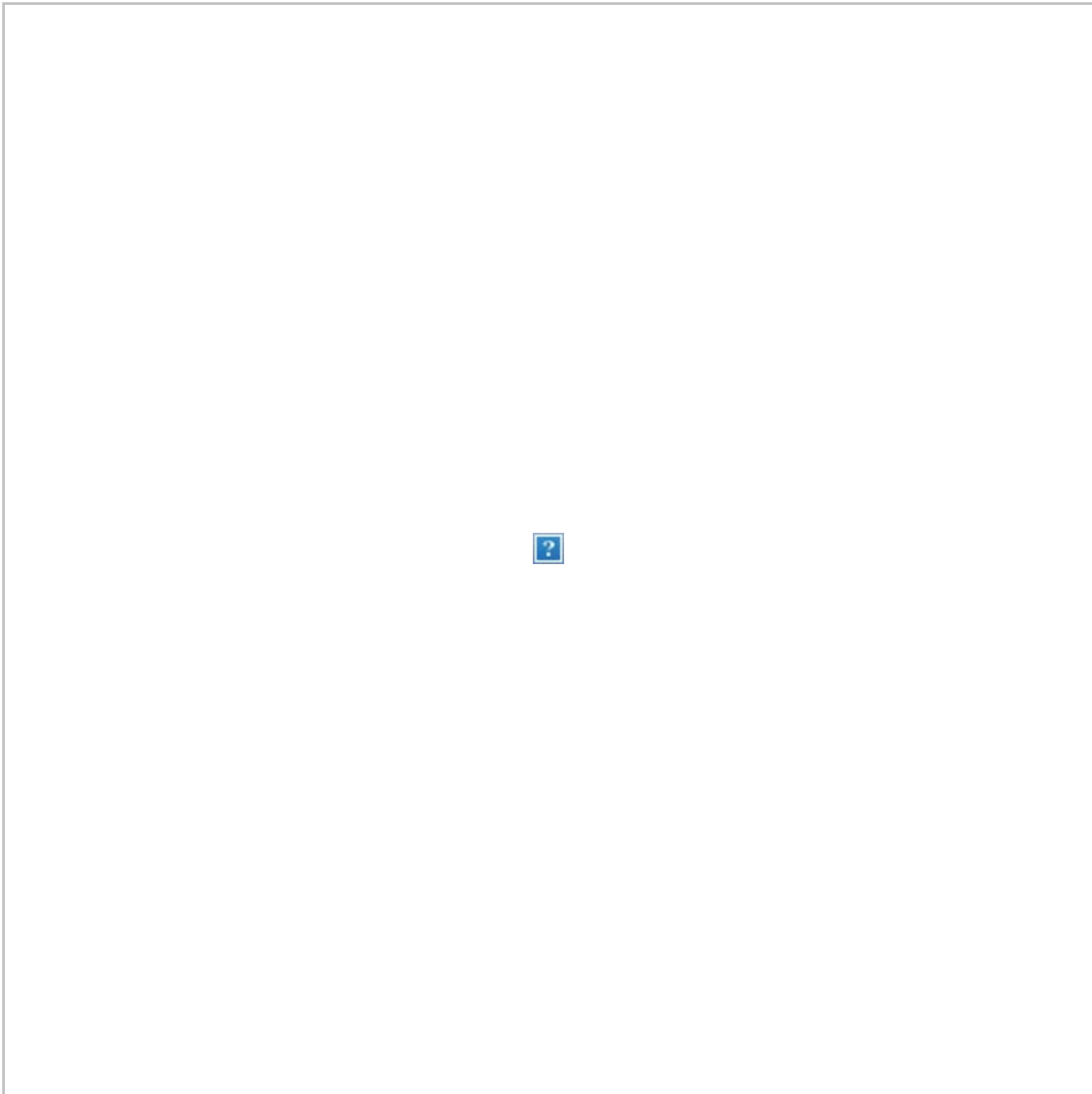
**signatures in an attempt to overturn the D.C. Council's repeal of the minimum wage hike for tipped workers.** [Fenit Nirappil reports](#): "But a combination of procedural rules, legal challenges and bad timing left referendum supporters with a week to collect about 25,000 signatures required to put the issue back on the ballot. If they can collect enough signatures, the city would hold a special election early next year. Officials with the 'Save Our Vote' coalition have deployed more than 100 signature collectors outside supermarkets, government buildings, bars and even dog parks to pull off what seems like an insurmountable task. They are paying circulators \$3.75 a signature with the possibility of more, quadruple the standard rate. Workers have been working around the clock in a Northwest D.C. house since last Thursday, verifying that signatures belong to registered D.C. voters."

**-- George Washington University officials are pushing to end a project started in 1997 to honor the legacy of Jackie Robinson.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "The decision sparked an outcry from students, donors and teachers who testify to the impact of the project. The Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society, a student group associated with the project, launched a petition that has been signed by 499 people and that urges administrators to allow the project to continue."

**VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

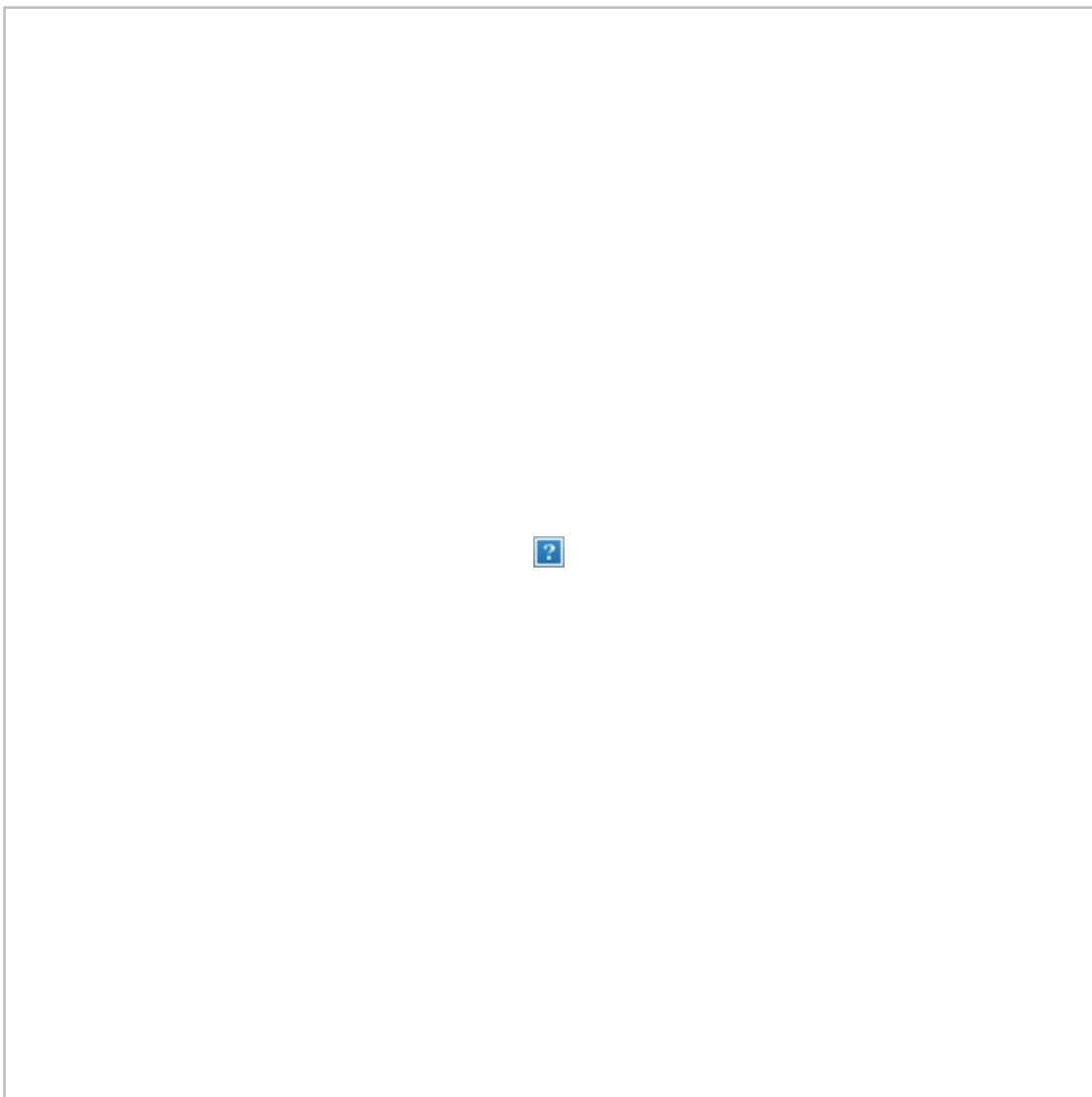


SNL imagined what would happen if Trump were black:



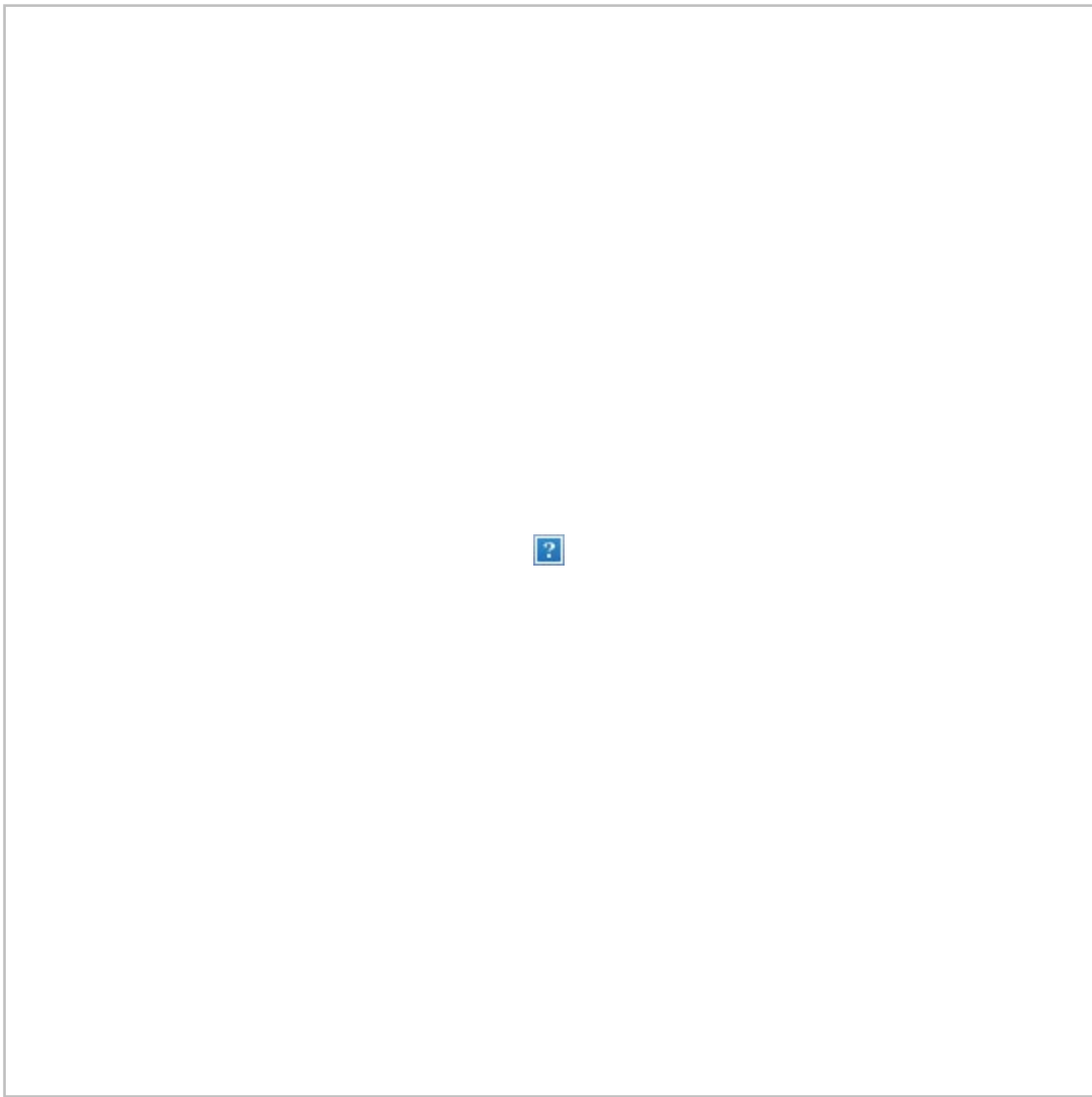
Them Trumps - SNL

SNL's Michael Che defended Kevin Hart after the comedian stepped down from hosting the Oscars over old tweets containing homophobic language:



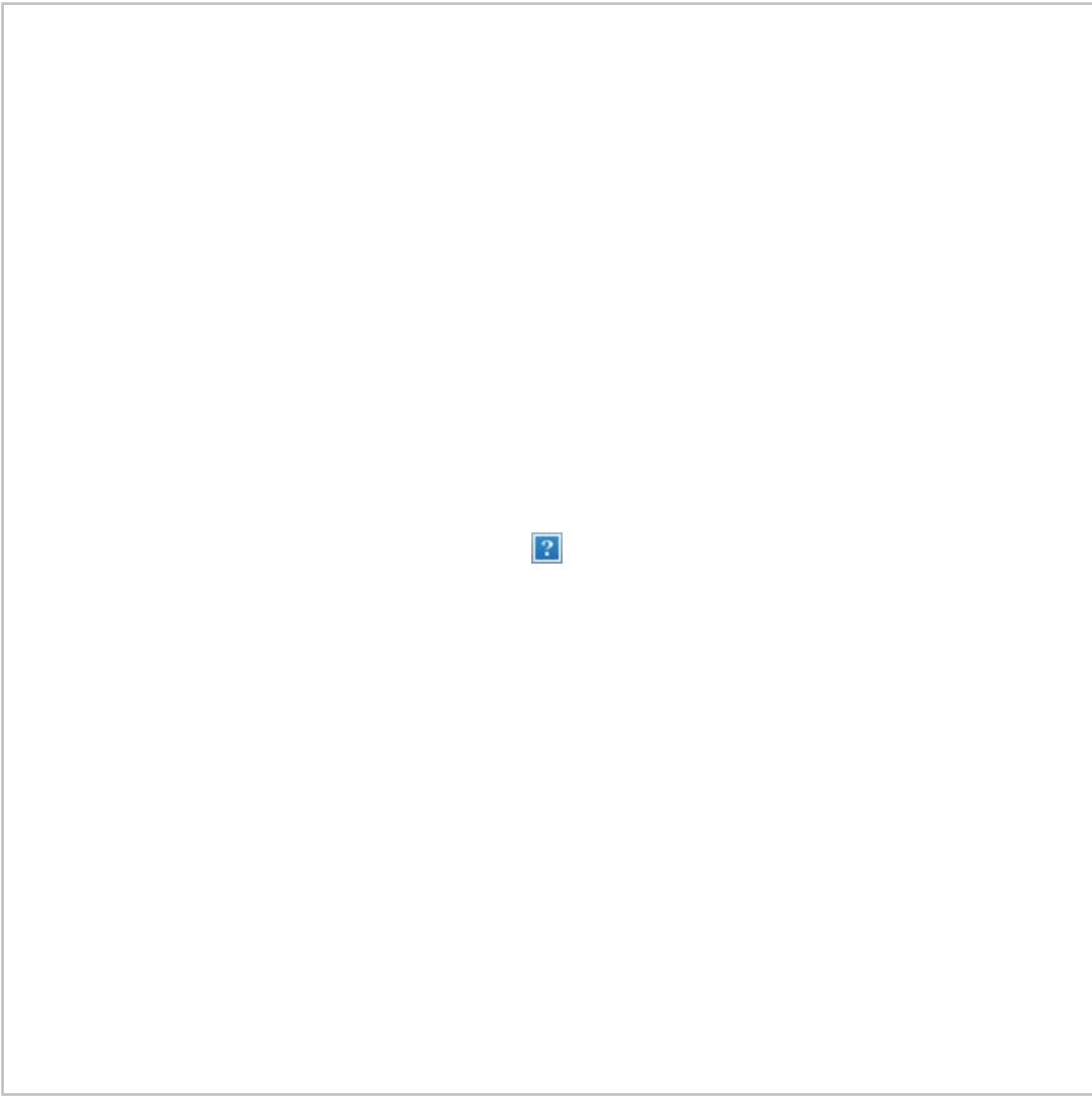
Weekend Update: SpaceX Launches Rocket with Cremated Remains - SNL

Trump tossed the coin at the Army-Navy game:



Trump tosses the coin for the Army-Navy game

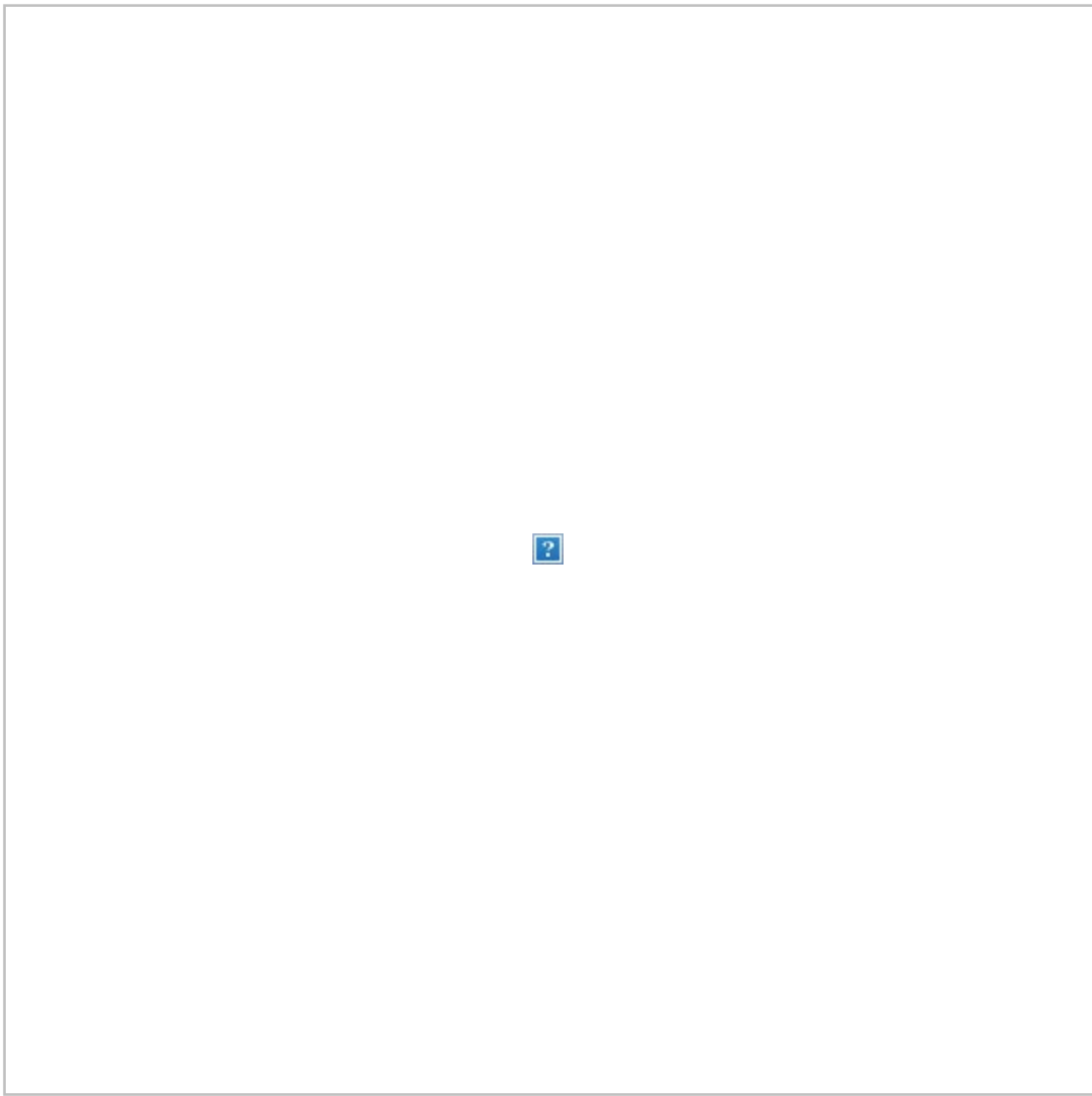
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez revealed her own Jewish ancestry on the last night of Hanukkah:



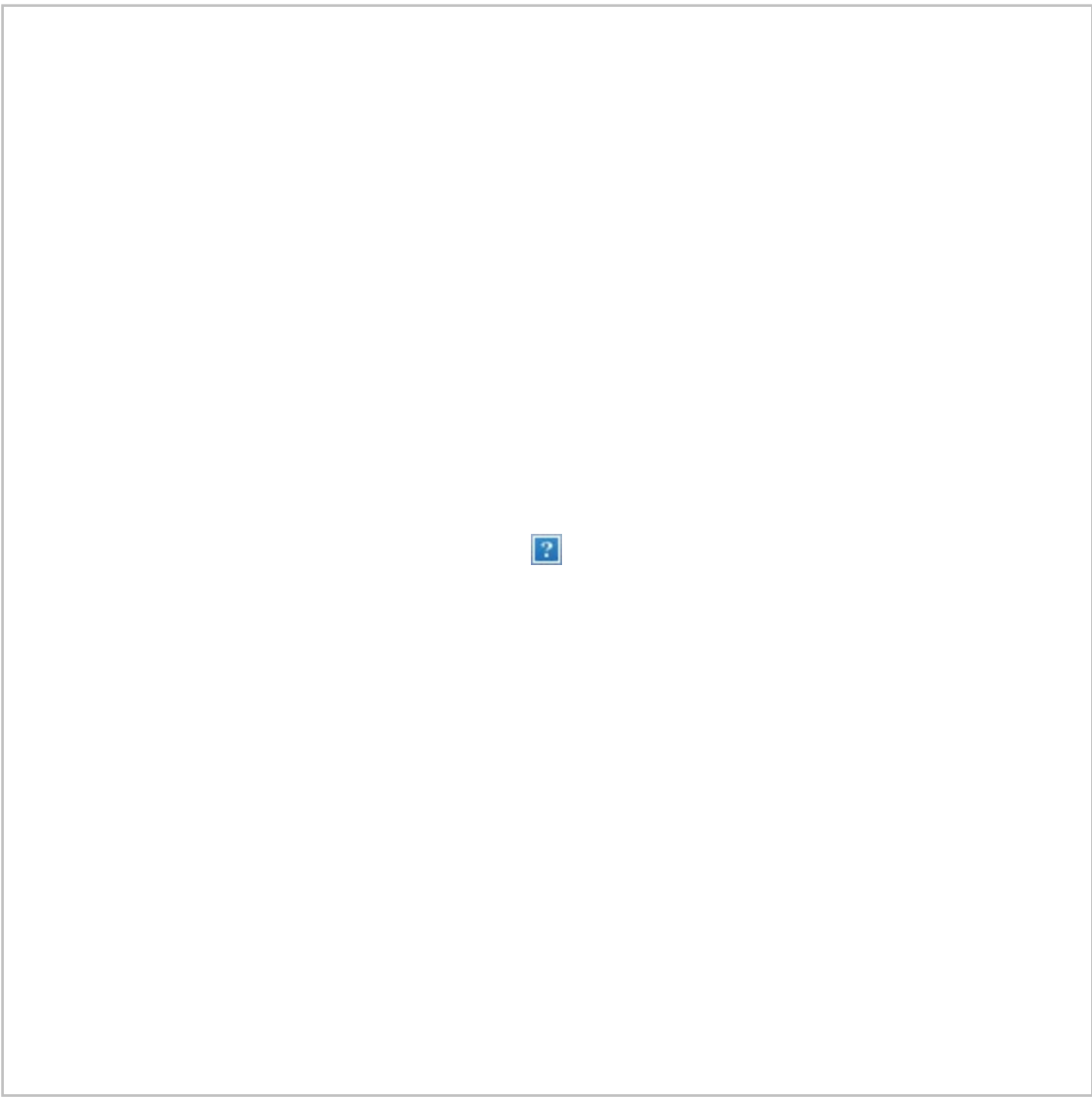
Two men were caught on camera robbing a Salvation Army collection kettle in Minnesota:



Miami beat New England with a wild final play:



And an NBA player's unfortunate interaction with a fan went viral:



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[Anton Porter](#)

Subject:

The Daily 202: Four reasons that even some Trump loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff

Date:

Monday, December 10, 2018 9:32:21 AM

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# The Daily 202



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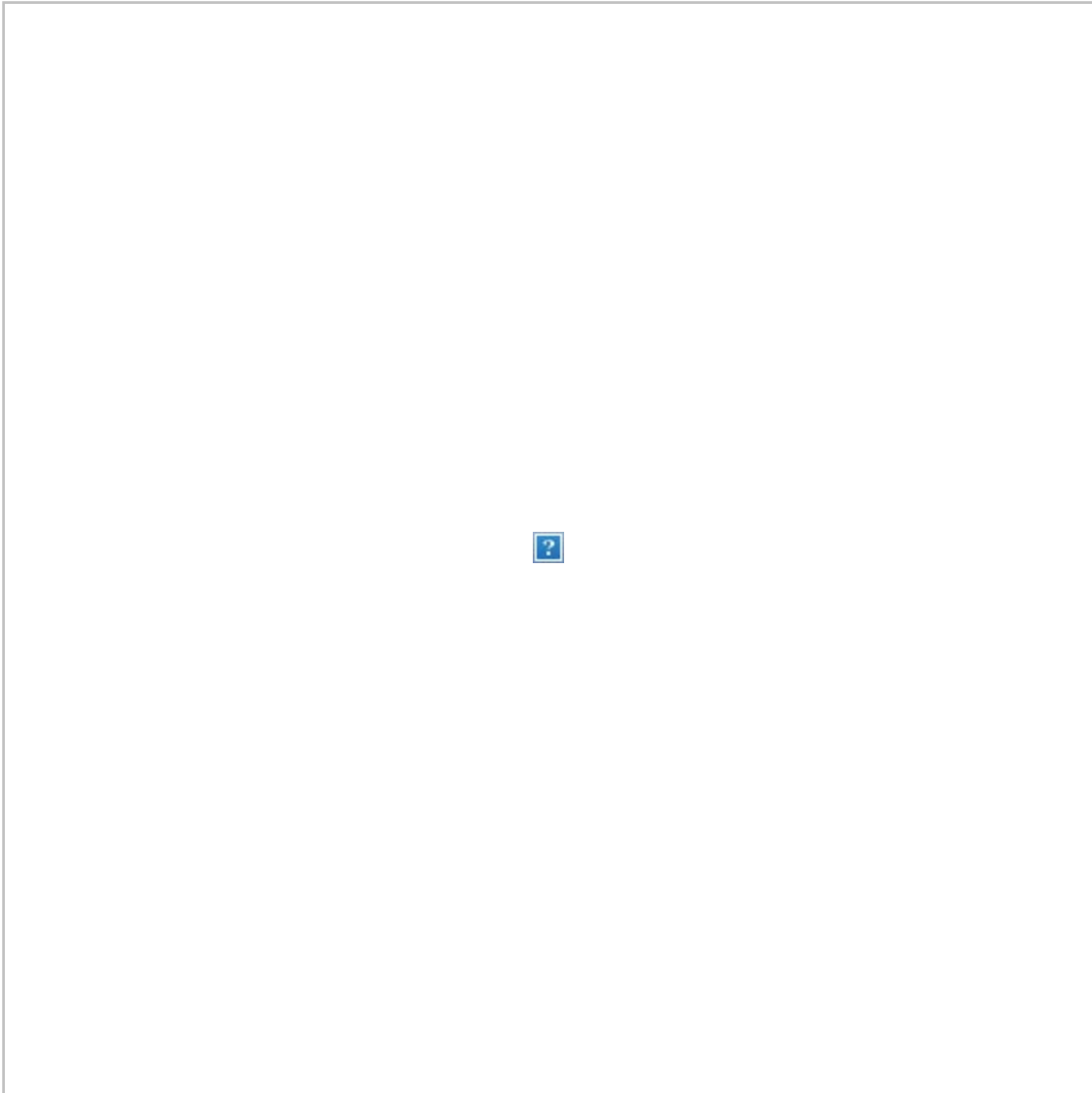
 Listen to The Big Idea



## Four reasons that even some Trump



# loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff



A look back at John Kelly's relationship with President Trump



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** There's a tweet for everything. "3 chiefs of staff in less than 3 years of being President," Donald Trump posted in 2012. "Part of the reason why

@BarackObama can't manage to pass his agenda."

But Barack Obama never had a problem finding talented people eager to take the job, and a 36-year-old certainly never snubbed the previous president the way that Nick Ayers did on Sunday. Now, with two months left in his second year, President Trump is back at square one as he searches for a third chief of staff.

**Advisers to Trump were "stunned" that Vice President Pence's chief turned down the chance to replace John Kelly**, claiming he wanted to spend more time with his family in Georgia, Maggie Haberman reports on the front page of the [New York Times](#): "One former senior administration official called it a humiliation for Mr. Trump and his adult children, an emotion that the president tries to avoid at all costs. ... Two people close to Mr. Trump said that a news release announcing Mr. Ayers's appointment had been drafted, and that the president had wanted to announce it as soon as possible."

-- **Who now?** "Trump's new list of potential chiefs includes Office of Management and Budget Director **Mick Mulvaney** ... and Rep. **Mark Meadows** (R-N.C.), a leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus," [per The Post's Felicia Sonmez, Josh Dawsey and Damian Paletta](#). "Acting Attorney General **Matthew G. Whitaker** and Trade Representative **Robert E. Lighthizer** were

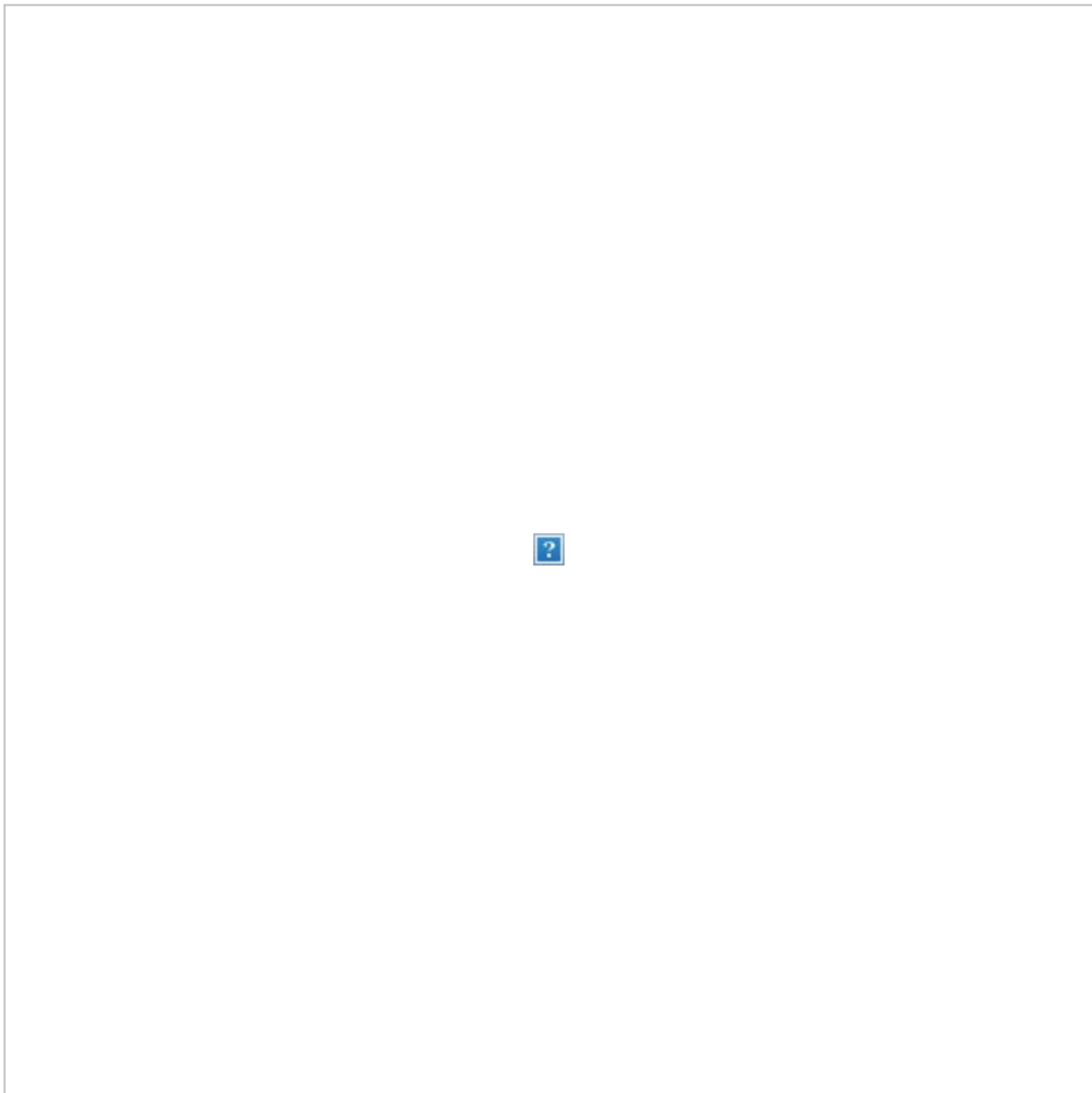
also said to be under consideration. But a senior administration official, who spoke privately and was not authorized to discuss the talks, said there was reluctance to move Lighthizer into the role [because] he is integral to negotiations with China over trade. Another senior administration official said that Mulvaney and Treasury Secretary **Steven Mnuchin** have both expressed internally that they aren't seeking the job but could change their minds if Trump pleads with them."

The [Associated Press](#) reports that Mulvaney is not interested in becoming chief of staff, citing a person close to him: "Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary. ... A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff. ... Trump's former deputy campaign manager, **David Bossie**, is also among the names being floated by some close to the White House. ... Pence's deputy chief of staff, Jarrod Agen, is expected to assume Ayers' role for the vice president."

"Former Gov. **Chris Christie** of New Jersey, who as a onetime United States attorney could help Mr. Trump in an impeachment fight, was also being mentioned," per the Times.

"In recent days, another name for chief of staff has

cropped up among Trump's advisers: **Wayne Berman**, senior managing director and head of global government affairs at the Blackstone Group," per [Politico](#). "Berman, who served as a top political aide at the Commerce Department under President George H.W. Bush, is close to Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, who remains one of Trump's closest confidants in the business world."



John Kelly, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and Nick Ayers listen as President Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting in March. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

**-- For anyone, under any president, this is a hard job with a Herculean learning curve. But there are four unique reasons that this position is especially foreboding for ambitious apparatchiks, even Trump loyalists.**

### **1) Ivanka cannot be managed.**

Kelly clashed constantly with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the president's daughter and son-in-law. They technically reported to him, but they had a direct channel to the president and maneuvered behind the scenes to replace him as chief.

"The couple told others privately that Kelly shared damaging stories about them and had not always served the president well," [Josh, Seung Min Kim and Phil Rucker reported](#) on Saturday. "For his part, Kelly joked that the couple was 'playing government,' and he said they should never have been brought into the White House — and that the pair thought they did not have to follow the traditional rules."

It's very hard, if not impossible, to manage your boss's kids. The power dynamic will always be challenging, no matter how clearly roles and responsibilities are delineated. This is why many public companies and agencies have nepotism rules.

Ayers had carefully cultivated an alliance with Javanka, who went to bat for him with Trump, even as other senior administration officials lobbied against him directly to the president. But then there's this wrinkle: Two sources tell [CNN](#) that one reason Ayers did not take the job was because of resistance from Melania Trump. The first lady has been more assertive recently, and she recently got the deputy national security adviser fired after a conflict that seemed to stem from a dispute over seating arrangements on a flight to Africa.

Just as in any West Wing, there are other competing power centers to worry about, as well. Then there's the 2020 reelection campaign, which will have offices in New York and Northern Virginia. There are also seemingly dozens of outside friends and advisers whom Trump phones regularly for advice.

The president has a long history, going back to his time managing Atlantic City casinos, of pitting staff against each other because he thinks it means he gets better advice and prevents anyone else from becoming too powerful. Remember the epic clashes between then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in 2016?



'Undisciplined, challenging individual': Tillerson opens up on working with Trump

## **2) Trump will not be managed.**

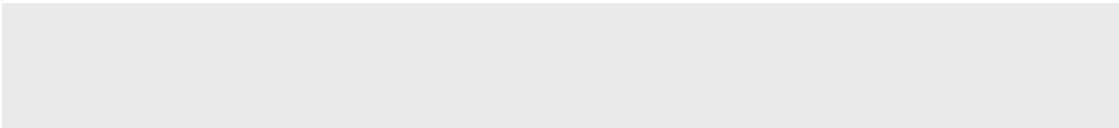
A chief of staff must manage both down and up, but the 72-year-old in the Oval Office seems pretty set in his habits. Trump also wants it both ways. He wants his White House to run “like a fine-tuned machine,” as he’s said it does, but – ever the showman – he also likes the reality TV vibe, where people are constantly left wondering where they stand and if they’ll get written off in

the next episode.

To put it mildly, Trump doesn't sweat the small stuff. Former secretary of state Rex Tillerson [described](#) some of his frustrations with advising an "undisciplined" president during an event in Houston last Thursday night. "What was challenging for me coming from the disciplined, highly process-oriented ExxonMobil corporation," Tillerson said, was "to go to work for a man who is pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things, but rather just kind of says, 'This is what I believe.' ... So often the president would say, 'Here's what I want to do, and here's how I want to do it' and I would have to say to him, 'Mr. President, I understand what you want to do, but you can't do it that way. It violates the law.' "

The president responded hours later by saying that he fired Tillerson because he "didn't have the mental capacity needed": "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell."

As far as the president is concerned, nothing is ever his fault. The guy in the adjacent office is a natural scapegoat, maybe even more so than whoever is at Foggy Bottom.







CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

## How to finance a cleaner planet

In 2018, Bank of America issued its fourth and largest green bond for \$2.25 billion. Learn more about this innovative way of financing a more sustainable future.





President Trump speaks on the phone in the Oval Office, joined by then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, Vice President Pence, senior adviser Steve Bannon, Communications Director Sean Spicer and national security adviser Michael Flynn. Only Pence, whose job is protected by the Constitution, remains. (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

**3) With so many storm clouds on the horizon, the odds are good that the next chief will need to retain his own lawyers.**

House Democrats get their gavels, and subpoena power, in just three weeks. Whoever gets this job will almost

certainly need to hire a personal attorney at some point with the White House under so much scrutiny from so many quarters, even if they do nothing wrong. [CNN](#) reported last week, for example, that Kelly responded to questions from special counsel Bob Mueller's team in recent months after initially resisting an interview.

No one but Trump fully knows how great his legal exposure might be on *L'Affaire Russe*. The president recently [defended](#) his efforts to make business deals with Russians tied to the Kremlin during the campaign – which he falsely, vigorously and repeatedly denied at the time – as “very legal & very cool.”

“The White House is adopting what one official termed a ‘shrugged shoulders’ strategy for the Mueller findings, calculating that most GOP base voters will believe whatever the president tells them to believe,” [Bob Costa and Rucker reported](#) in Sunday's paper. “But some allies fret that the president's coalition could crack apart under the growing pressure. Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump strategist who helped him navigate the most arduous phase of his 2016 campaign, predicted 2019 would be a year of ‘siege warfare’ and cast the president's inner circle as naively optimistic and unsophisticated. ... Rather than building a war room to manage the intersecting crises as past administrations have done, the Trump White House is understaffed, stuck in a bunker mentality and largely resigned to a plan to

wing it. Political and communications operatives are mostly taking their cues from the president and letting him drive the message with his spontaneous broadsides.”

Then there’s the specter of impeachment proceedings. Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), who will chair the House Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, used the I-word on the Sunday shows. Discussing the campaign finance violations laid out in the Friday court filings about longtime Trump consigliere Michael Cohen, Nadler told CNN’s Jake Tapper: “They would be impeachable offenses. Whether they’re important enough to justify an impeachment is a different question. But certainly, they’re impeachable offenses, because, even though they were committed before the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office.”

Don’t forget the economy. Some experts believe we’re headed for a slowdown, maybe even a [recession](#). The stock market has recently wiped out its 2018 gains, and investors are [no longer buying](#) on the dip the way they had been. A handshake agreement has led to a fragile détente in the trade war with China, but it could escalate again quickly. The Federal Reserve raising interest rates has drawn Trump’s ire, and the stimulus from last year’s tax cuts is running out.

Ayers reportedly plans to lead the pro-Trump super PAC

for 2020, which walls him off from some of the aforementioned drama. “Another factor,” per Haberman: “His ascension to the top West Wing job would have meant newfound scrutiny of his personal finances — last year he reported a net worth of \$12.2 million to \$54.8 million, a sizable sum for a political operative in his 30s who has amassed his own fortune. He accumulated his wealth partly through a web of political and consulting companies in which he has held ownership stakes.”



President Trump steps off Air Force One on July 28, 2017, after firing Reince Priebus via tweet. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

#### **4) The risk of public humiliation is high.**

Few who have gone into the administration at a senior level have emerged stronger from the experience. That's not how it usually works. Typically a top White House job ensures a lifetime of lucrative opportunities. Some ex-Trumpers have struggled to get good jobs on the outside.

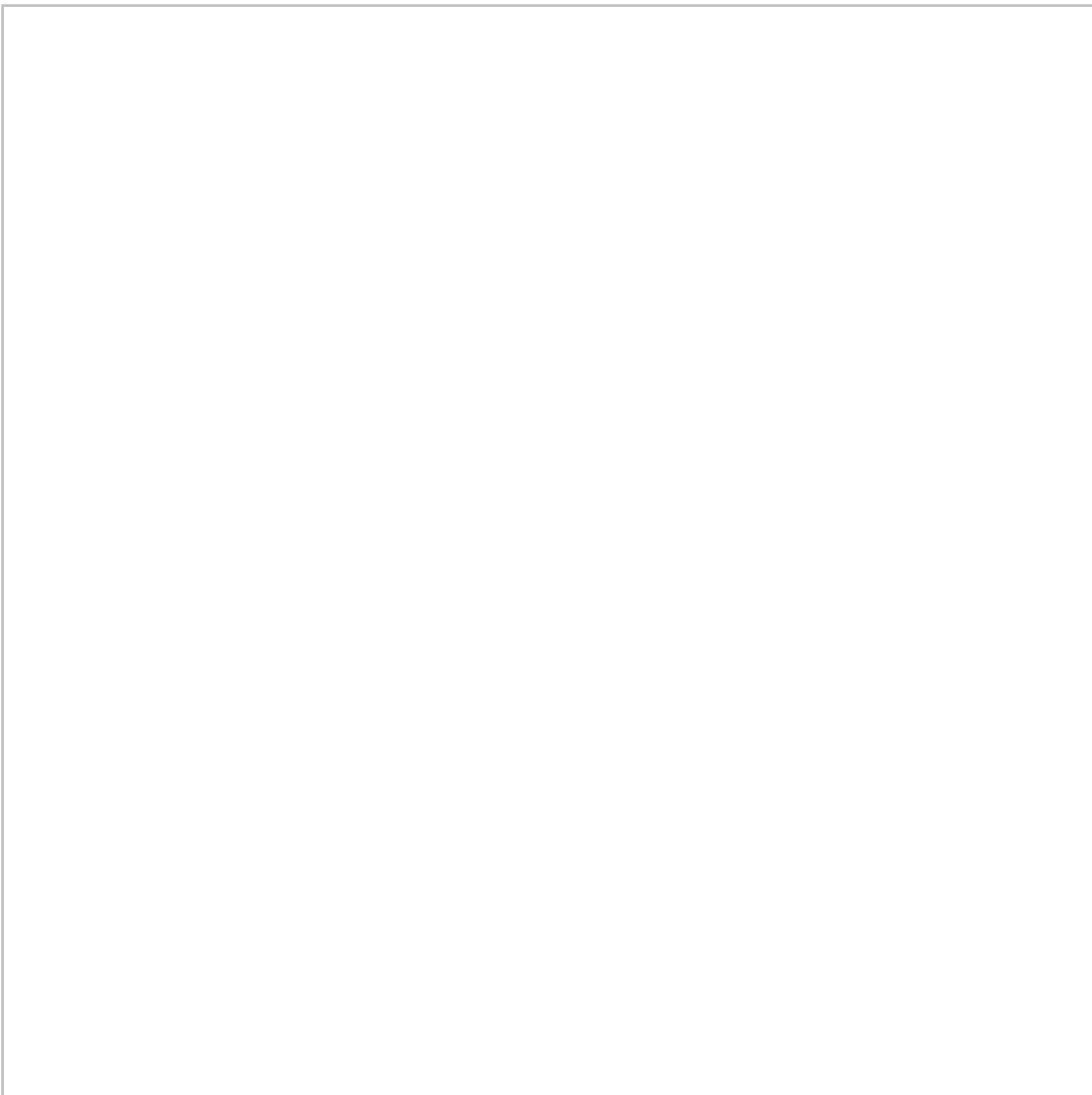
Ayers wanted to hold the chief job for only a few months and then transition out, but the president wanted him to be available through 2020. One reason he reportedly wanted to be a short-timer is to avoid months of speculative stories about whether he was on the verge of being pushed out – indignities that both of Trump's chiefs suffered through.

Trump unceremoniously ousted his first chief of staff Reince Priebus, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, on a rainy Friday night in July 2017. After Air Force One touched down at Andrews Air Force base, Priebus was sitting in a Suburban with senior policy adviser Stephen Miller and social media director Dan Scavino. When Trump tweeted that Kelly would replace him, Miller and Scavino hopped out of the vehicle. Priebus was left alone, and his Suburban [peeled away](#) from the motorcade – which continued onto the White House without him.

Priebus later debriefed Chris Whipple, the author of “The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency,” on the conflict and disarray in the White House. “Take everything you’ve heard and multiply it by 50,” Priebus told him for a piece that ran [in Vanity Fair](#).

“People mistake me for a laid-back guy from the Midwest,” he continued. “I’m much more aggressive, and much more of a knife fighter. Playing the inside game is what I do.”

But the knife fighter from Kenosha couldn’t avoid being stabbed in the back by his colleagues.



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Minerva Cisneros was killed by her partner, Arturo Sigala-Villavicencio, 28, on Christmas in 2015. (Ilana Panich-Linsman for The Washington Post)

## GET SMART FAST:

1. **Nearly half of women murdered over the past decade were killed by an intimate partner,** according to a Washington Post analysis. More than one-third of all men who killed an intimate partner were known to be a threat *before* the murder. ([Katie Zezima, Deanna Paul, Steven Rich, Julie Tate and](#)

[Jennifer Jenkins](#))

2. **An antitrust lawsuit alleging price-fixing in the generic-drug industry has expanded into an investigation of at least 16 companies and 300 drugs.** A federal prosecutor leading the probe described the industry as “most likely the largest cartel in the history of the United States.”  
([Christopher Rowland](#))
3. **Former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn was indicted after allegations of financial wrongdoing.** Japanese prosecutors said that, over four years, Ghosn underreported his income by 50 percent. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
4. **A major winter storm caused power outages and flight cancellations in the Southeast.** States of emergency were declared in Virginia and North Carolina as nearly half a million people were left without power and the region's schools [announced](#) closures. ([Luz Lazo](#))
5. **Authorities are investigating a string of arson attacks targeting the worship centers of Jehovah's Witnesses.** No motive has been uncovered for the attacks, which have already destroyed two of the pacifist religion's worship centers. ([Cleve R. Wootson Jr.](#))

6. **Research shows 2018 has been the worst on record for gun violence in schools.** According to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 94 school shootings occurred this year — a 60-percent increase from the previous high of 59 set in 2006. ([the Guardian](#))
7. **The first U.S. teachers strike against a charter school operator came to a close in Chicago.** More than 500 teachers will return to work today after reaching an agreement with Acero schools on pay raises and the school calendar. ([Associated Press](#))
8. **NPR's reliance on temporary workers has prompted complaints of exploitation.** NPR's union said between 20 and 22 percent of the public broadcaster's union-covered newsroom are temp workers, making it an outlier among broadcast media organizations. ([Paul Farhi](#))
9. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a holiday-themed reminder not to eat raw cookie dough.** The agency warned that flour is a “raw agricultural product” and can contain bacteria linked to E. coli. ([Newsweek](#))



President Trump speaks with California officials as they view damage from the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

## **THE PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES:**

**-- The Trump administration opposed a move to endorse a dire report on climate change at a United Nations conference in Poland. [David Nakamura and Darryl Fears report](#): “Arguments erupted Saturday night before a United Nations working group focused on science and technology, where **the United States****

**teamed with Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait** to challenge language that would have welcomed the findings of the landmark report, which said that the world has barely 10 years to cut carbon emissions by nearly half to avoid catastrophic warming. ‘There was going to be an agreement to welcome the . . . report,’ said Jake Schmidt, the managing director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s international program, who is in Poland. ‘The U.S. wanted to ‘note’ it, which is saying in essence that we know it’s out there but we have no comment.’”

**-- Bowing to pressure from antiabortion groups, the Trump administration halted a government-run study using fetal tissue to try to find a cure for HIV.** [Amy Goldstein and Lenny Bernstein report](#): “A senior scientist at a National Institutes of Health laboratory in Montana told colleagues that the Health and Human Services Department ‘has directed me to discontinue procuring fetal tissue’ from a firm that is the only available source, according to an email he sent to a collaborator in late September. **‘This effectively stops all of our research to discover a cure for HIV,’ the researcher wrote.** The research disruptions might extend to a handful of other labs using fetal tissue, all of which are part of NIH ... **The shutdown of the HIV research at the federal lab in Montana ... was never disclosed publicly by government officials, who have forbidden affected researchers from discussing what happened.**”

**-- Trump's trade war, as well as developments in the Russia investigation, is creating market volatility.**

[From the New York Times's Matt Phillips](#): "The trade war has already taken a toll on large chunks of the global economy. China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, is growing at its slowest rate in nearly a decade. The export-driven economies of Japan and Germany — the third and fourth biggest economies in the world, respectively — both contracted in the third quarter. The United States has so far been an outlier. ... But even in the United States, there are emerging pockets of weakness, particularly in parts of the economy that are sensitive to rising borrowing costs."

**-- The possibility of a partial government shutdown next week still looms. [The New York Times's Julie](#)**

[Hirschfeld Davis and Emily Cochrane report](#): "The deepest impasse — and the one with the greatest potential to prompt a year-end breakdown — is over Mr. Trump's demand for \$5 billion for a wall on the United States' southern border. ... Mr. Trump is set to host [Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi] at the White House on Tuesday for a meeting that will test the new dynamic between a president weakened by midterm election losses and empowered Democrats working to define their party for the era of divided government. ... Beyond the wall fight and the bare-minimum endeavor of keeping the government fully open, a perennial year-end appetite for

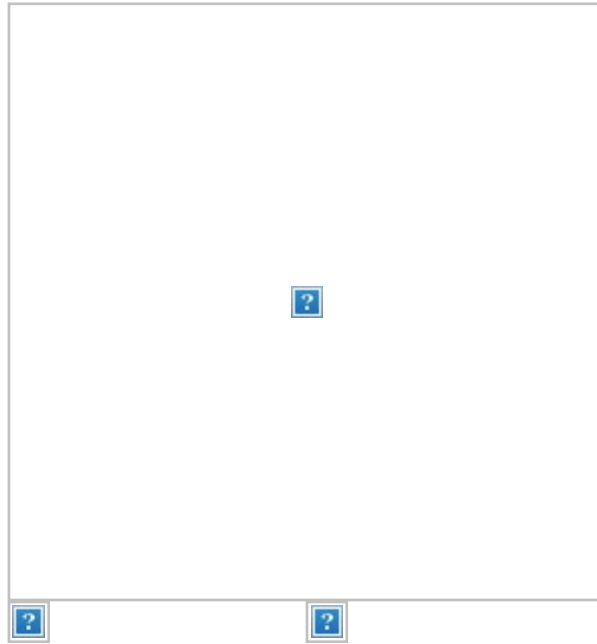
legislating has taken hold on Capitol Hill.”

**-- Trump has reversed his support for a cut in defense spending. [Politico's Wesley Morgan reports](#):**

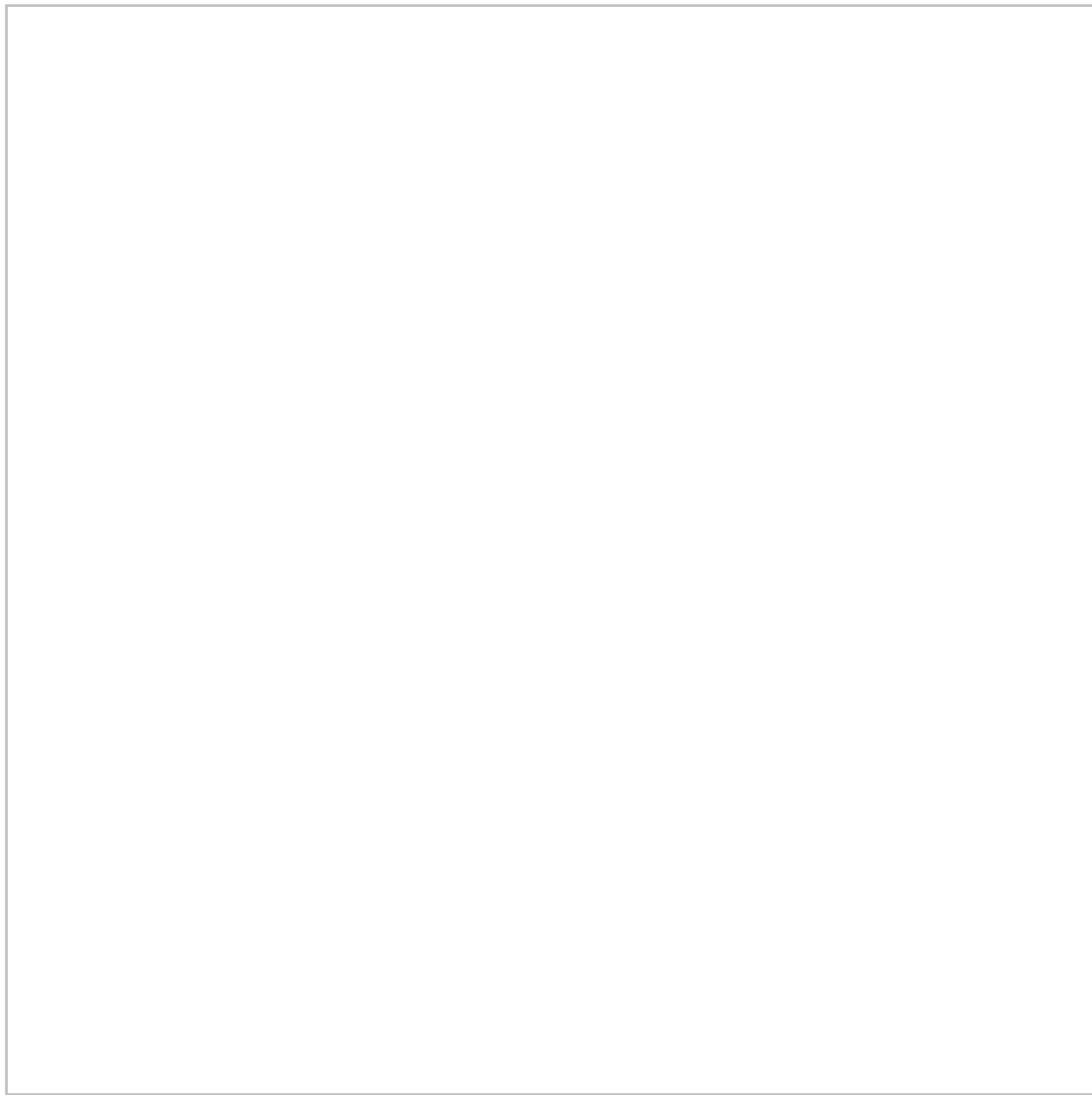
“Trump has told Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to submit a \$750 billion budget proposal for fiscal 2020 ... The \$750 billion figure emerged from a meeting Tuesday at the White House among Trump, Mattis and the Republican chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees ... That would dwarf the \$733 billion budget proposal Mattis and other top military leaders have been fighting to preserve and would represent a stunning about-face for a president who recently called the fiscal 2019 top line of \$716 billion for defense spending ‘crazy.’”

**-- A growing number of incoming lawmakers, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), are casting a spotlight on how Capitol Hill treats its interns and staffers. [Elise Viebeck reports](#):** “When [Ocasio-Cortez] said last week that she would not only pay her interns, but also provide more than the minimum wage, the news had an immediate impact. ... Congress performs terribly on metrics related to staff diversity, workplace protections and employee pay and benefits. Advocates warn that the system is built to accept only the most privileged young people — often white, moneyed and with connections — who later fill the pipeline for Washington’s political and business establishment. The system has gone unchallenged for years. But scrutiny by

Ocasio-Cortez and her peers after the recent midterm elections is stirring hopes that Capitol Hill might be ready for change.”







Inside the filings: Court documents reveal new contact between Trump's inner circle and Russian

## **THERE'S A BEAR IN THE WOODS:**

**-- Records show at least 14 Trump associates had contact with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign and presidential transition. [Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Carol D. Leonnig report](#): “Again and again and again, over the course of [Trump’s] 18-month campaign for the presidency, Russian citizens made contact with his closest family**

members and friends, as well as figures on the periphery of his orbit. Some offered to help his campaign and his real estate business. Some offered dirt on his Democratic opponent. Repeatedly, Russian nationals suggested Trump should hold a peacemaking sit-down with Vladimir Putin — and offered to broker such a summit. ... [T]he mounting number of communications that have been revealed occurred against the backdrop of ‘sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the U.S. presidential election,’ as [Bob] Mueller’s prosecutors wrote in a court filing last week."

**-- Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen will be sentenced on Wednesday, as federal prosecutors in Manhattan appear to shift their focus toward the Trump Organization’s possible participation in campaign-finance violations. [The New York Times’s Ben Protess, William K. Rashbaum and Maggie Haberman report](#):** “Mr. Cohen, Mr. Trump’s self-described fixer, has provided assistance in that inquiry, which is separate from the investigation by the special counsel ... In addition to implicating Mr. Trump in the payments to the two women, Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that the company’s chief financial officer was involved in discussions about them, a claim that is now a focus of the inquiry, according to [people briefed on the matter] ...

**“Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that he believes Mr. Trump personally approved the company’s decision**

**to reimburse him for one of the payments.** ... [T]here is no indication that anyone at the company will face charges in connection with the inquiry. But in recent weeks, the prosecutors contacted the company to renew a request they had made this year for documents and other materials ... The precise nature of the materials sought was unclear, but the renewed request is further indication that prosecutors continue to focus on the president's company even as the case against Mr. Cohen comes to a close."

**-- Legal experts remain divided on whether a sitting president can be indicted, a question that will carry great weight for Trump moving forward.** [The AP's Michael Balsamo reports](#): "The Supreme Court has never ruled on whether the president can be indicted or whether the president can be subpoenaed for testimony. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which provides legal advice and guidance to executive branch agencies, has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted. Two Justice Department reports, one in 1973 and one in 2000, came to the same conclusion. Those reports essentially concluded that the president's responsibilities are so important that an indictment would pose too many risks for the government to function properly. Trump's lawyers have said that [Mueller] plans to adhere to that guidance, though Mueller's office has never independently confirmed that."

**-- Conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi sued Mueller for alleged constitutional violations and leaking grand jury secrets.** [Politico's Josh Gerstein reports](#): "Corsi's new suit against Mueller also accuses the special prosecutor of trying to badger Corsi into giving false testimony that he served as a conduit between Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to then-candidate [Trump]. ... Corsi is demanding \$100 million in actual damages and \$250 million in punitive damages for injury to his reputation."

**-- Former White House counsel John Dean said the details revealed in Mueller's court filings give Congress "little choice" but to start impeachment proceedings.** "I don't know that this will forever disappear into some dark hole of unprosecutable presidents," Dean said. "I think it will resurface in the Congress. I think what this totality of [Friday's] filings show that the House is going to have little choice, the way this is going, other than to start impeachment proceedings." ([Michael Brice-Saddler](#))



Are new Russia probe findings a dire sign for Trump? Lawmakers weigh in.

**-- Republican lawmakers defended Trump on the Sunday shows amid his escalating legal troubles.**

[Felicia Sonmez and Ariana Eunjung Cha report](#): “In an interview on NBC News’s ‘Meet the Press,’ Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) played down the alleged campaign finance violations detailed by prosecutors, arguing that such missteps should not be ‘over-criminalized.’ ... He added that if campaign finance violations are aggressively prosecuted, ‘we’re going to become a banana republic,

where every president gets prosecuted and every president gets thrown in jail when they're done with office.' ... Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said Sunday on CBS News's 'Face the Nation' that 'there's no reason to not stand by anybody in this moment,' drawing a distinction between individuals who have been accused of crimes and pleaded guilty and others, presumably Trump."

**-- But Rubio added that, if Trump chooses to pardon Manafort, it could "trigger a debate" about overhauling pardon powers.** "I don't believe that any pardons should be used with relation to these particular cases, frankly," Rubio said on [ABC News](#). "Not only does it not pass the smell test, I just think it undermines the reason why we have presidential pardons in the first place, and I think, in fact, that if something like that were to happen, it could trigger a debate about whether the pardon powers should be amended given these circumstances, so I hope that they don't do that. It would be a terrible mistake if they did."

**-- And Rand voiced concerns about Trump's attorney general nominee, William Barr.** [Sonmez reports](#): "'I'm concerned that he's been a big supporter of the Patriot Act, which lowered the standard for spying on Americans. And he even went so far as to say, you know, the Patriot Act was pretty good, but we should go much further.' ... Paul said that while he hasn't made a decision on Barr, 'I

can tell you, the first things that I've learned about him being for more surveillance of Americans is very, very troubling.”



Former FBI director James Comey goes through security as he arrives to testify before the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees on Capitol Hill. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Former FBI director Jim Comey dodged many questions from House lawmakers about the bureau's 2016 investigations, often citing overlap with**

**Mueller's probe.** [Karoun Demirjian and Matt Zapotosky report](#): “Republicans from the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees peppered Comey with questions about the FBI’s investigation into former secretary of state Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server, including whether Comey would have dismissed former officials Peter Strzok and Lisa Page from the probe had he known they were exchanging texts disparaging [Trump]. Comey said he probably would have. However, the former director repeatedly declined to answer questions seeking detailed answers about elements of the FBI’s Russia investigation, which Comey either could not recall — such as who prepared the document launching the bureau’s counterintelligence investigation of individuals affiliated with Trump — or thought came too close to [Mueller’s investigation].”

**-- An FBI official who accompanied Comey for his testimony at one point confirmed Mueller is investigating Trump’s possible obstruction of justice.** [The Atlantic’s Andrew Kragie reports](#): “The moment came as Representative Trey Gowdy, the retiring South Carolina Republican who grew famous for leading a Benghazi investigation, was asking Comey whether he considered a Justice Department memo sufficient grounds for Trump to fire him. The FBI official, Cecilia Bessee, interrupted Gowdy: ‘Mr. Chairman, to the extent that question goes—again, goes to the special counsel’s investigation into obstruction, the witness will not be able



to answer.’”

**-- Speaking to an audience in New York last night, Comey implored American voters to end Trump’s presidency by electing a Democrat in 2020. [CNN’s Gregory Krieg reports](#): “All of us should use every breath we have to make sure the lies stop on January 20, 2021,’ Comey told an audience at the 92nd Street Y on New York City’s Upper East Side. He all but begged Democrats to set aside their ideological differences and nominate the person best suited to defeating Trump in an election. ‘I understand the Democrats have important debates now over who their candidate should be,’ Comey told MSNBC’s Nicolle Wallace, ‘but they have to win. They have to win.’ ... Asked if Trump might be an unindicted co-conspirator in some of the crimes recently described by [Mueller], Comey said he didn’t know, ‘but if he’s not there, he’s certainly close.’”**

**-- Robby Mook, who managed Hillary Clinton’s campaign, has an I-told-you-so [op-ed for Monday’s Post](#) that outlines just how much was publicly known about Trump’s ties to Russia before the election: “Obviously, much more evidence about Russia’s interference has come out since 2016. But I’m not sure we’ve learned the bigger lesson: Why did it take two years and dozens of indictments for so many to believe that Russia was not only behind the DNC hack but may also have been in cahoots with the Trump campaign,**

when there was so much evidence at the time? It's as if something needs to be secret or hidden to truly matter. If it's sealed in a courtroom, it must be a bombshell, but if it's out in the open, it's just not as serious. **Trump will not be the last of his kind. The next time so much evidence about a candidate is sitting out in plain view, let's hope it gets a good look before Americans cast their votes."**



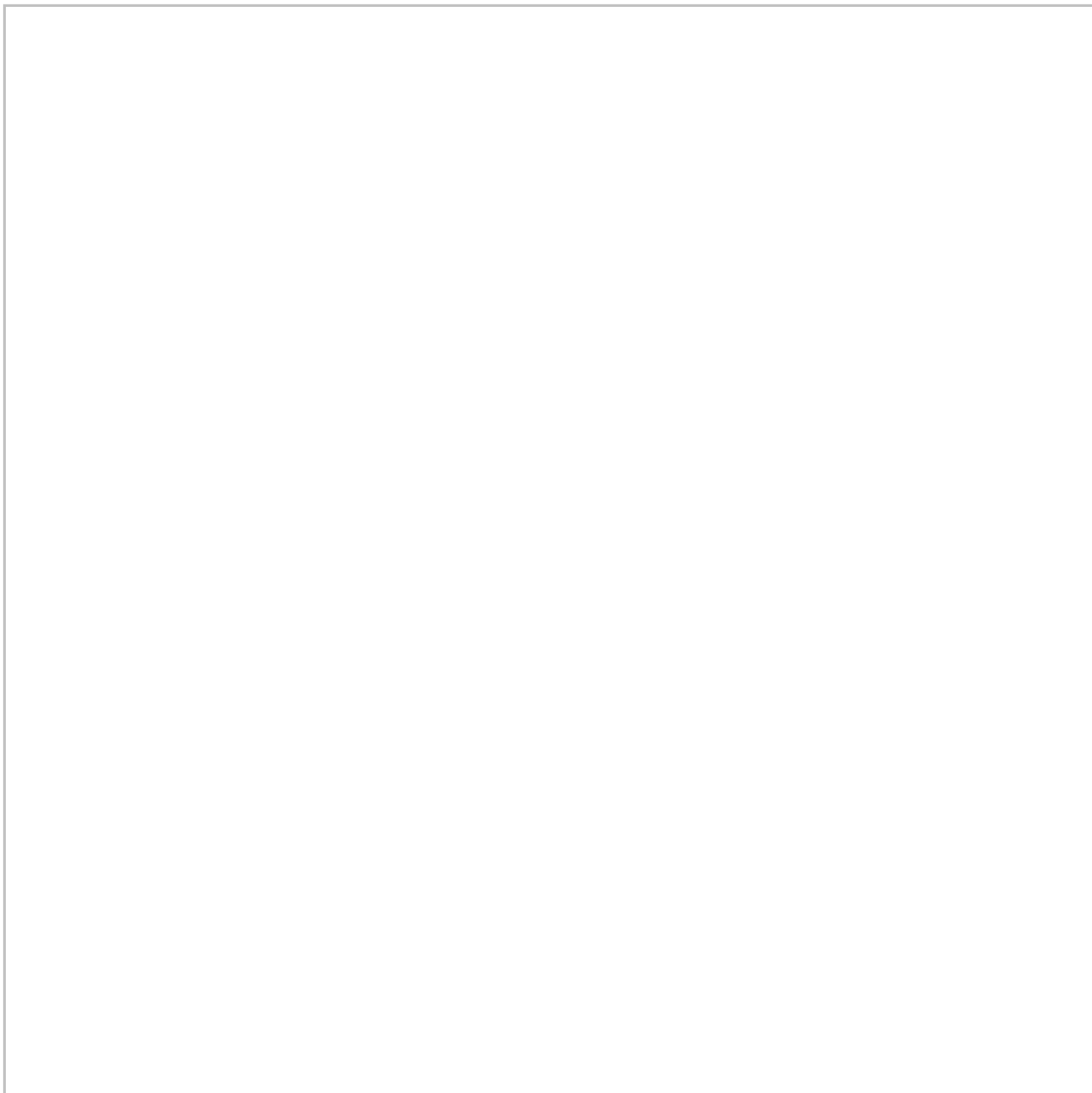
**MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

**-- Wisconsin's Democratic governor-elect suggested he may pursue legal challenges against Republicans' lame-duck legislation. [Felicia Sonmez reports](#):** “‘I’m not making any promises one way or the other, but we’re looking at all issues, all options on the table,’ [Gov.-elect Tony Evers] said ... ‘I need to stand up for the people of Wisconsin. There’s 2.6 million people that voted in this last election, and they expect me to do that. So we’re going to pursue this.’ Evers said that he has urged Gov. Scott Walker (R) to veto the bills but that Walker was ‘noncommittal.’ Walker has previously signaled support for the measures.”

**-- The House Democratic caucus will be divided between progressives trying to push their party to the left and moderates looking for common ground with Republicans, a combination that could complicate their efforts to pass legislation. [Bloomberg News's Sahil Kapur reports](#):** “How Speaker-in-waiting Nancy Pelosi manages the tension, which is already on display, will frame the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination race, as the House will serve as the party’s main power center to advance its agenda and draw contrasts with [Trump]. Messy battles between the party’s factions risk undercutting Democrats hopes of rallying to defeat Trump in the next election, potentially costing them the chance to define the political debate and highlight favorable issues.”

**-- Now that all the midterm elections have officially concluded, Dave Weigel writes that Republicans have a clear path to regaining the House majority in 2020.**

[From Weigel](#): “[The number of] House Democrats in Trump districts: 30, up from 13 before the election, though it will tick up to 31 if a special election is called in North Carolina's 9th District and Republicans don't win. ... You don't have to squint to see a path back to a Republican majority in 2020; winning a little more than half of these seats would do that. But the flipped districts fall into two distinct categories. In 10 districts, Trump ran weaker than Mitt Romney had in 2012, while in the other 20, he ran stronger.”



Beto O'Rourke greets supporters following a rally in Austin. (Nick Wagner/Austin American-Statesman/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Early voting in California and Texas could fundamentally alter the Democratic primaries in 2020.** [NBC News's Alex Seitz-Wald reports](#): "A little over a year from now, millions of Californians will be mailed their ballots on the same day that Iowans head to their famous first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses. They could start

mailing them back before New Hampshire holds its first-in-the-nation primary in 2020. Meanwhile, Texans will likely have a chance to vote early, too — even before Nevada and South Carolina, which typically round out the earliest portion of the primary calendar. The explosion of early voting and reshuffling of the primary calendar in 2020 could transform the Democratic presidential nominating contest, potentially diminishing the power of the traditional, tiny and homogeneous early states in favor of much larger and more diverse battlegrounds. That would be a boon to the best-known candidates with war chests sizable enough to compete in big states early. And it would empower black and Hispanic voters in large, multiracial states like California, which was a virtual afterthought at the back of the primary calendar in 2016.”

**-- Nebraska Democrats decided to return to a primary system for 2020 rather than hold another caucus. [The Omaha World-Herald's Roseann Moring and Micah Mertes report](#):** “The state’s Democrats had been choosing their presidential nominee by caucus since 2008 in a system similar to Iowa’s. ... But Nebraska Democratic Party’s State Central Committee voted at its meeting in Ord on Saturday to discontinue the system and go back to regular primary voting. The change was overwhelmingly approved on a voice vote following about 90 minutes of debate. Critics of the caucuses cited the several-hour investment that voters have to make and said it could decrease turnout in the May primary, when

nominees for other offices are chosen.”

**-- Potential Democratic candidates are worried about how Beto O'Rourke could shake up the 2020 race if he chooses to run. [The New York Times's Matt Flegenheimer and Jonathan Martin report](#):** “[O'Rourke] has emerged as the wild card of the presidential campaign-in-waiting for a Democratic Party that lacks a clear 2020 front-runner. ... Advisers to other prospective Democratic candidates for 2020 acknowledge that Mr. O'Rourke is worthy of their concern. His record-setting success with small donors would test the grass-roots strength of progressives like Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. His sometimes saccharine call to summon the nation's better angels would compete with the likely pitch of Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. And his appeal to some former Obama advisers — and, potentially, his electoral coalition of young people, women and often infrequent voters — could complicate a possible run for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who would aim to win back many of his former boss's constituencies.”

**-- Elizabeth Warren's aides have started looking for a campaign headquarters in the Boston area. [Politico's Natasha Korecki reports](#):** “Warren has the core of her 2020 team in place if she runs for president. ... All that's left is for her to give the green light. When and if she does, she'll be rolling out arguably the most advanced

and sweeping infrastructure in the Democratic field, a plug-and-play campaign that could give her a massive head start on nearly every contender in the burgeoning primary roster, with only Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) coming close.”

**-- Technology is transforming how potential 2020 candidates present themselves to voters. [Michael](#)**

[Scherer reports](#): “The 2020 campaign ... will take place in a media landscape that has shifted in just the past two years and been radically transformed since the 2008 primary, which began before the release of the first iPhone. Iowa hay bale speeches and cable news primary debates will still play a role. But Democratic strategists say the quest to capture the attention of Democrats online, through social streams and viral sharing that exude a sense of immediacy and authenticity, could dominate the early months in a crowded field, as energized voters subscribe and swipe in search of a candidate match.”





People rally at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington to protest the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

## THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- A transcript of Jamal Khashoggi's killing revealed the Post contributing columnist's final words: "I can't breathe." [CNN's Nic Robertson reports](#): "[One] source, who has read a translated transcript of an audio recording of Khashoggi's painful last moments, said it was clear that the killing on October 2 was no botched rendition

attempt, but the execution of a premeditated plan to murder the journalist. During the course of the gruesome scene, the source describes Khashoggi struggling against a group of people determined to kill him. 'I can't breathe,' Khashoggi says. 'I can't breathe.' 'I can't breathe.' The transcript notes the sounds of Khashoggi's body being dismembered by a saw, as the alleged perpetrators are advised to listen to music to block out the sound. And, according to the source, the transcript suggests that a series of phone calls are made, briefing them on progress."

**-- British Prime Minister Theresa May was criticized as a traitor days before a Parliament vote on her Brexit deal. [William Booth reports](#):** "[A] march was called by the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), a once-ascendant movement now in decline, dominated by 'Euroskeptics' and right-wing populists. They were at the forefront of the winning Brexit campaign two years ago ... Now the Ukipers and their allies at the rally say they are being double-crossed by 'the establishment,' aided by a 'seditious BBC,' and a deep state of pro-Europe civil servants and global capitalists led by May. In the crowd, one man held aloft a gallows with a hangman's noose. Others shouted that May should be 'taken to the Tower,' the medieval palace-prison where Henry VIII had his wives killed."

**-- The Brexit deal is widely expected to be defeated,**

**which will probably set off a flurry of last-minute negotiations to avoid some of the most dire consequences of the country's withdrawal from the European Union.** [Michael Birnbaum reports](#): “Europeans have gone slackjawed at London’s political chaos, with normally demure diplomats comparing the process there to a slow-motion car wreck. They say they can offer little other than cosmetic tweaks that might help May save face with her own Conservative Party. And they have begun to accelerate their emergency planning to prepare safety nets that could avoid some of the humanitarian and economic chaos that might happen if Britain crashes out of the European Union on its deadline of March 29, with no other plan in place.”

**-- France has opened an investigation into possible Russian involvement with the country’s Yellow Vest protests.** [Bloomberg News’s Carol Matlack and Robert Williams report](#): “According to the Alliance for Securing Democracy, about 600 Twitter accounts known to promote Kremlin views have begun focusing on France, boosting their use of the hashtag #giletsjaunes, the French name for the Yellow Vest movement. French security services are looking at the situation, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Sunday in a radio interview with RTL.”

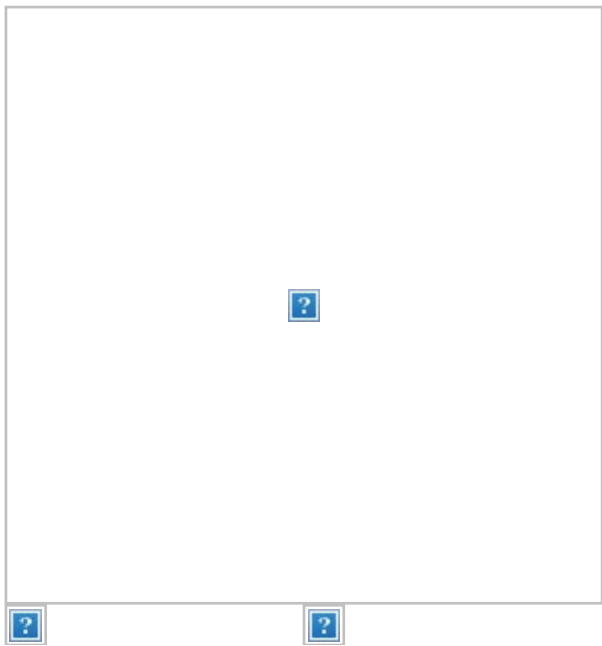
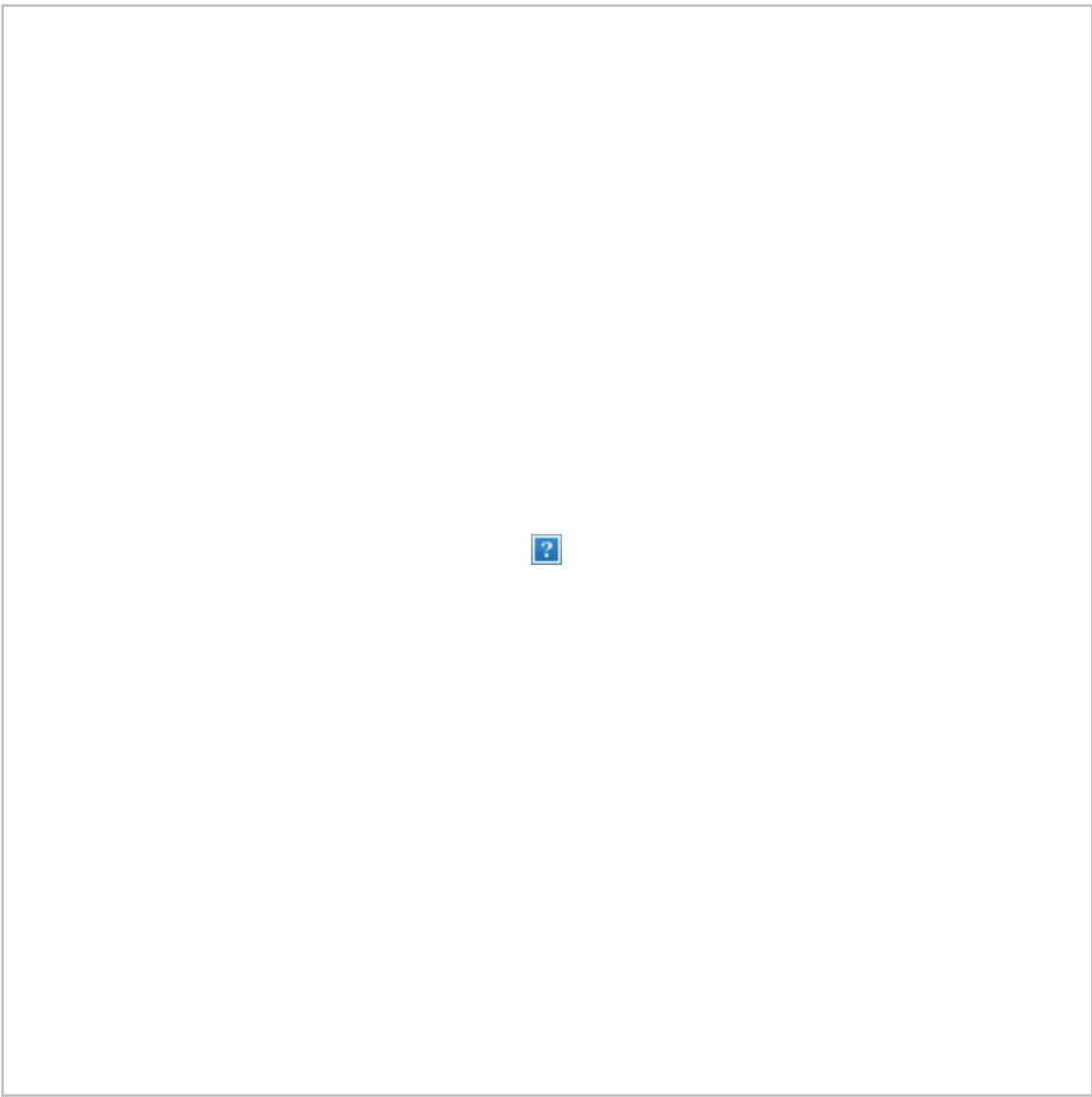
**SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

Trump dismissed a possible campaign-finance violation as a “simple private transaction.”

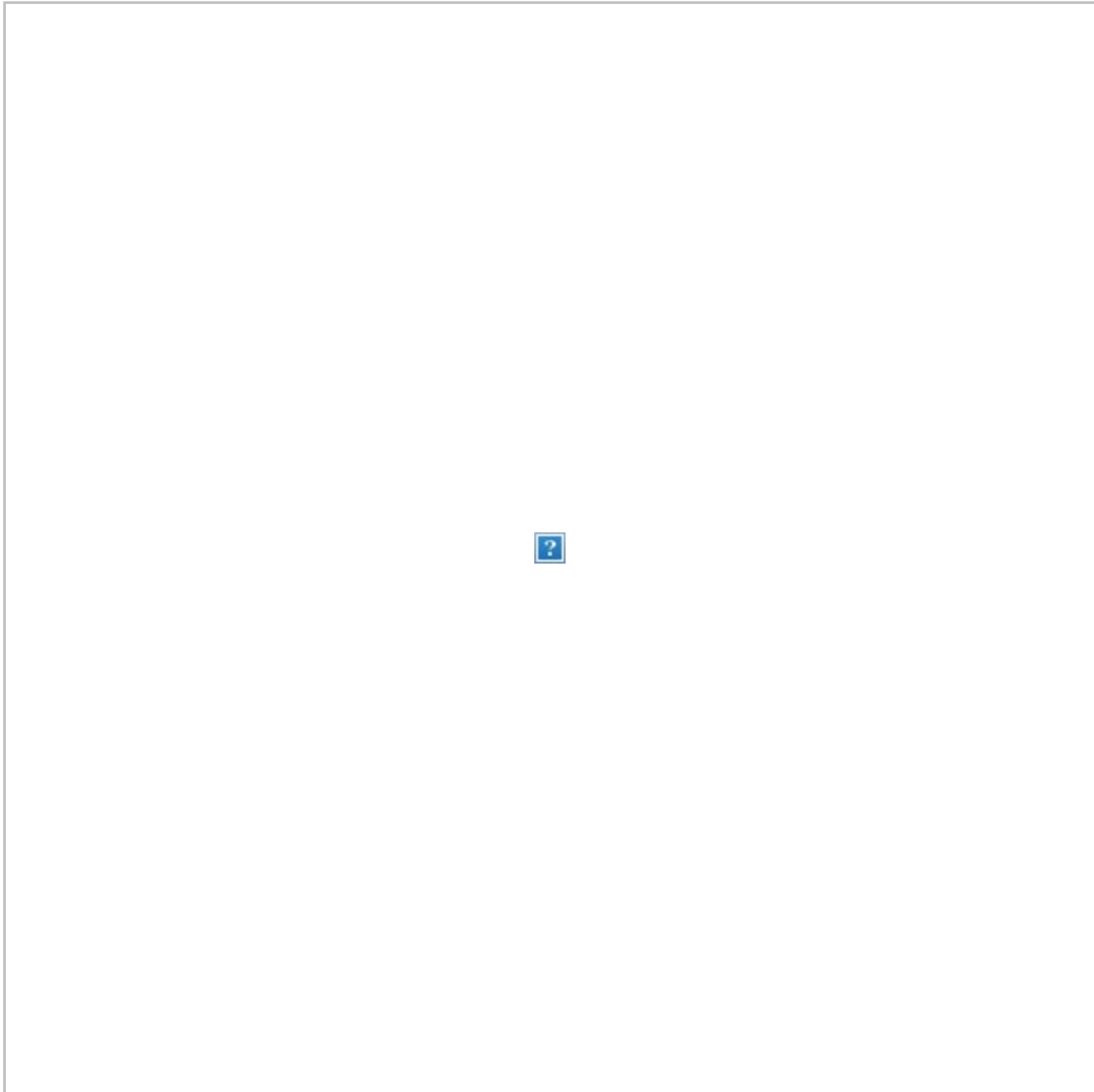




And he downplayed the chief of staff drama:



D.C. Twitter was dominated by buzz about Kelly, Ayers and the chief of staff search. From a CNN reporter:



Jeb Bush's former communications director cast doubt on the official storyline surrounding Ayers not getting the job:



Ayers confirmed he'll leave the White House at the end of the month:





From a Los Angeles Times editor:



A former spokesman for Hillary Clinton mocked Trump's search for a chief of staff:



A Democratic congresswoman called on Kelly to apologize:



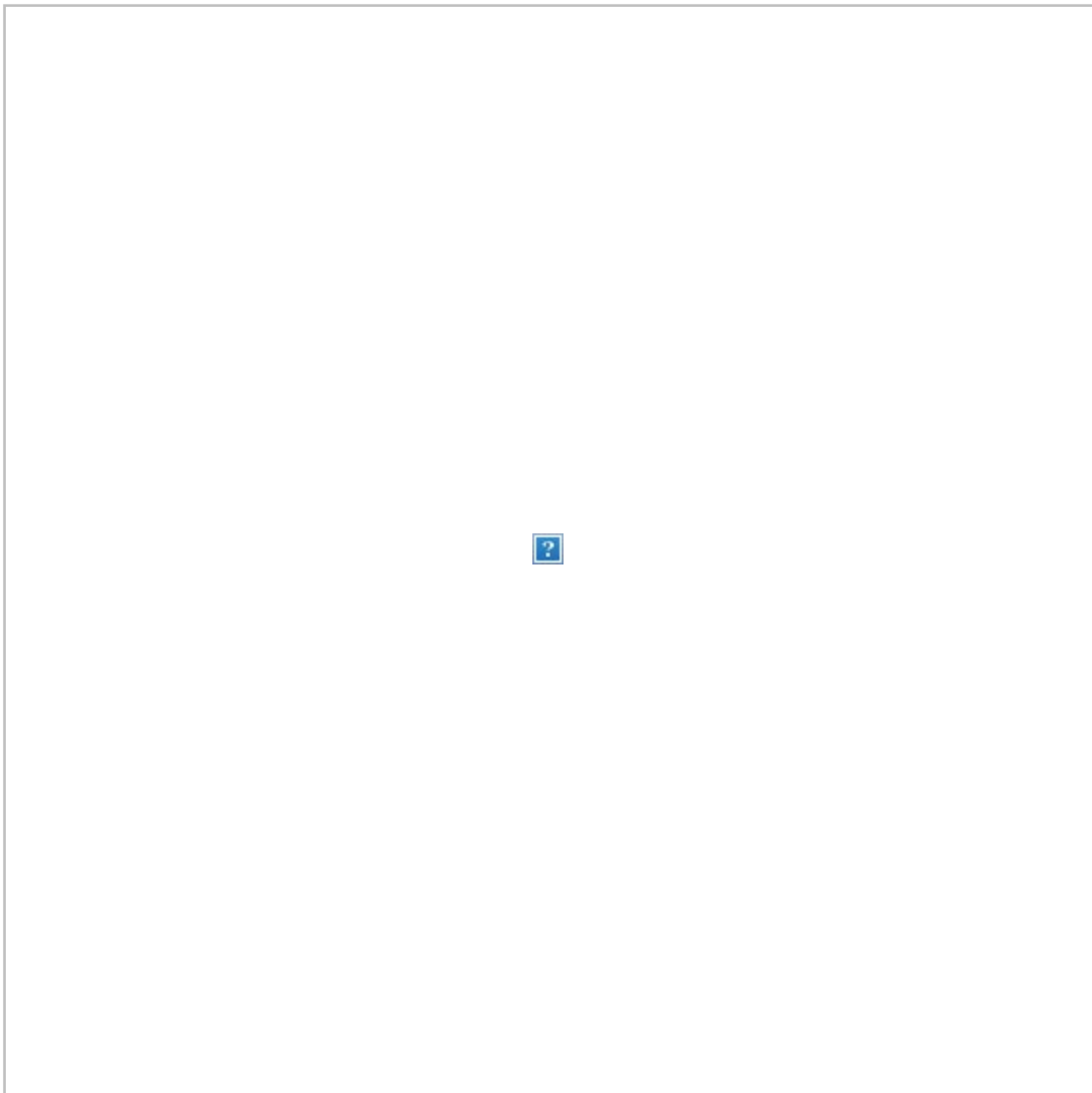
An MSNBC producer listed the many departures so far from the Trump administration:



Trump once again blamed the "Fake News Media" for negative coverage of his administration:



A former spokesman for Obama's Justice Department reflected on reports that prosecutors are weighing charging Trump for campaign-finance violations if he loses reelection:



A Bloomberg News reporter noted GOP lawmakers who have previously voted for impeachment:



A former Trump campaign adviser promoted a conspiracy theory about how federal agents obtained a FISA warrant on him:





A former FBI agent responded with context on the requirements for a FISA warrant:



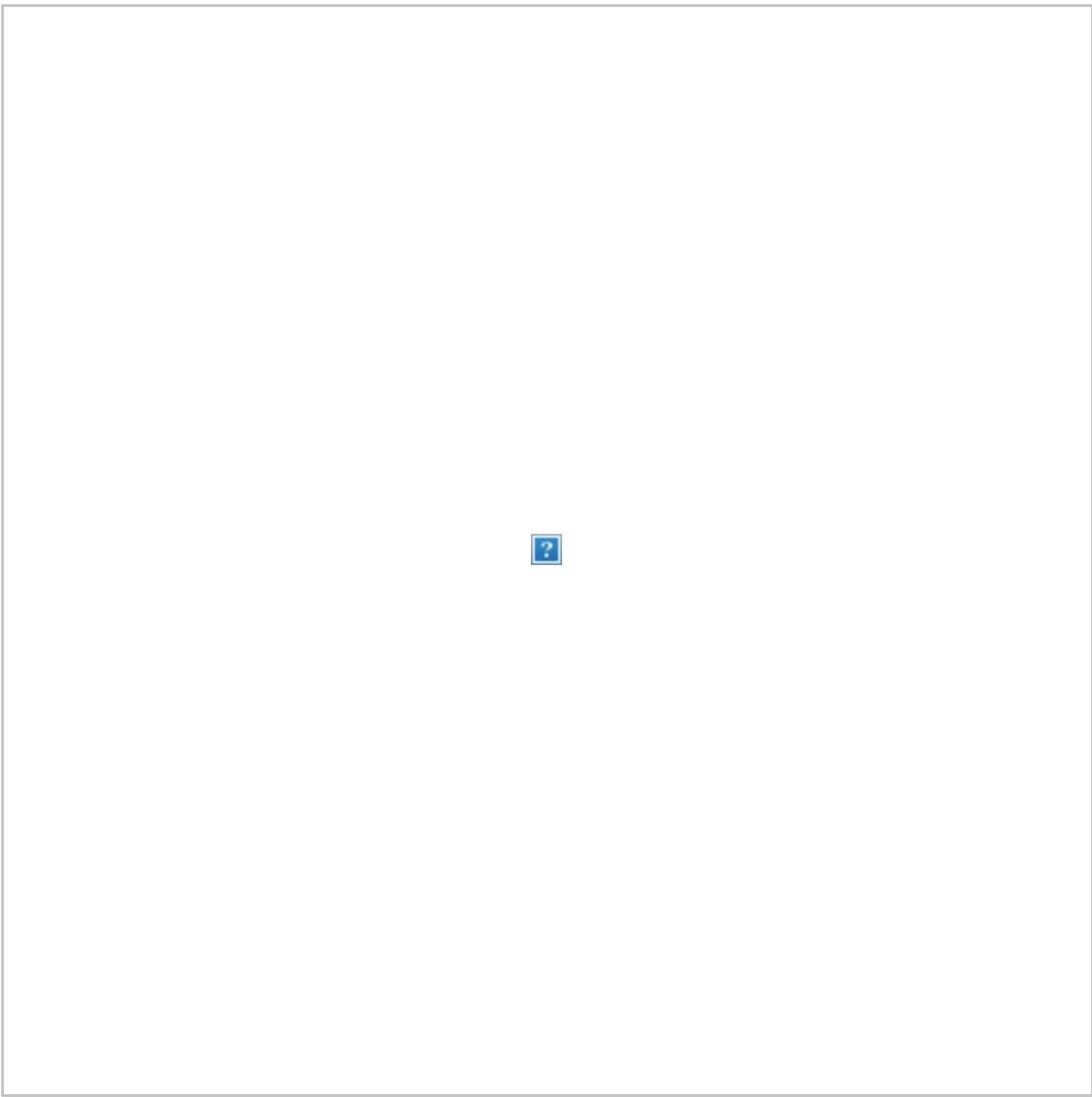
Papadopoulos replied:

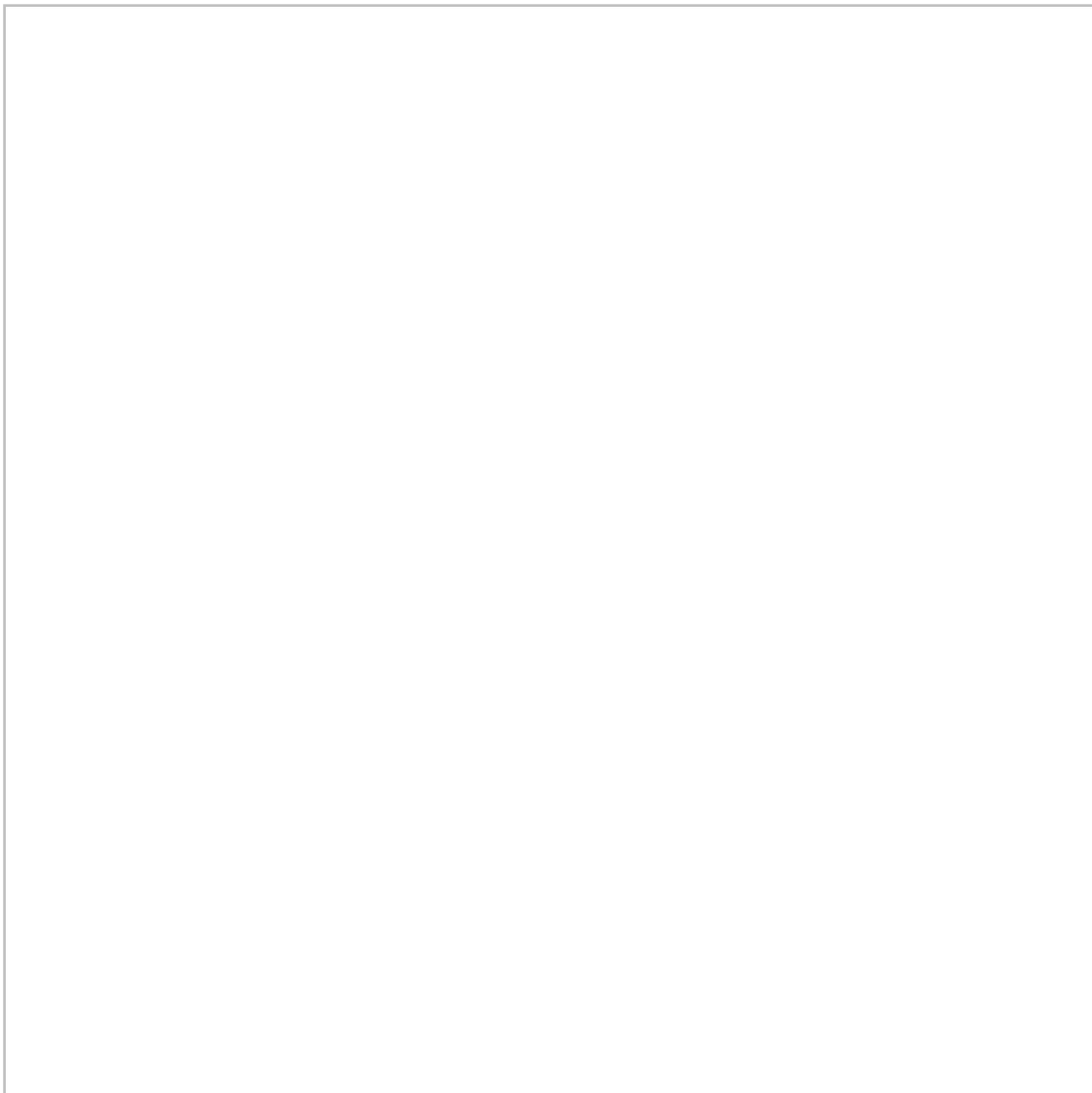


A Democratic congresswoman-elect reacted to a Weekly Standard reporter's criticism:



But the reporter then apologized, allowing for a rare moment of Twitter forgiveness:

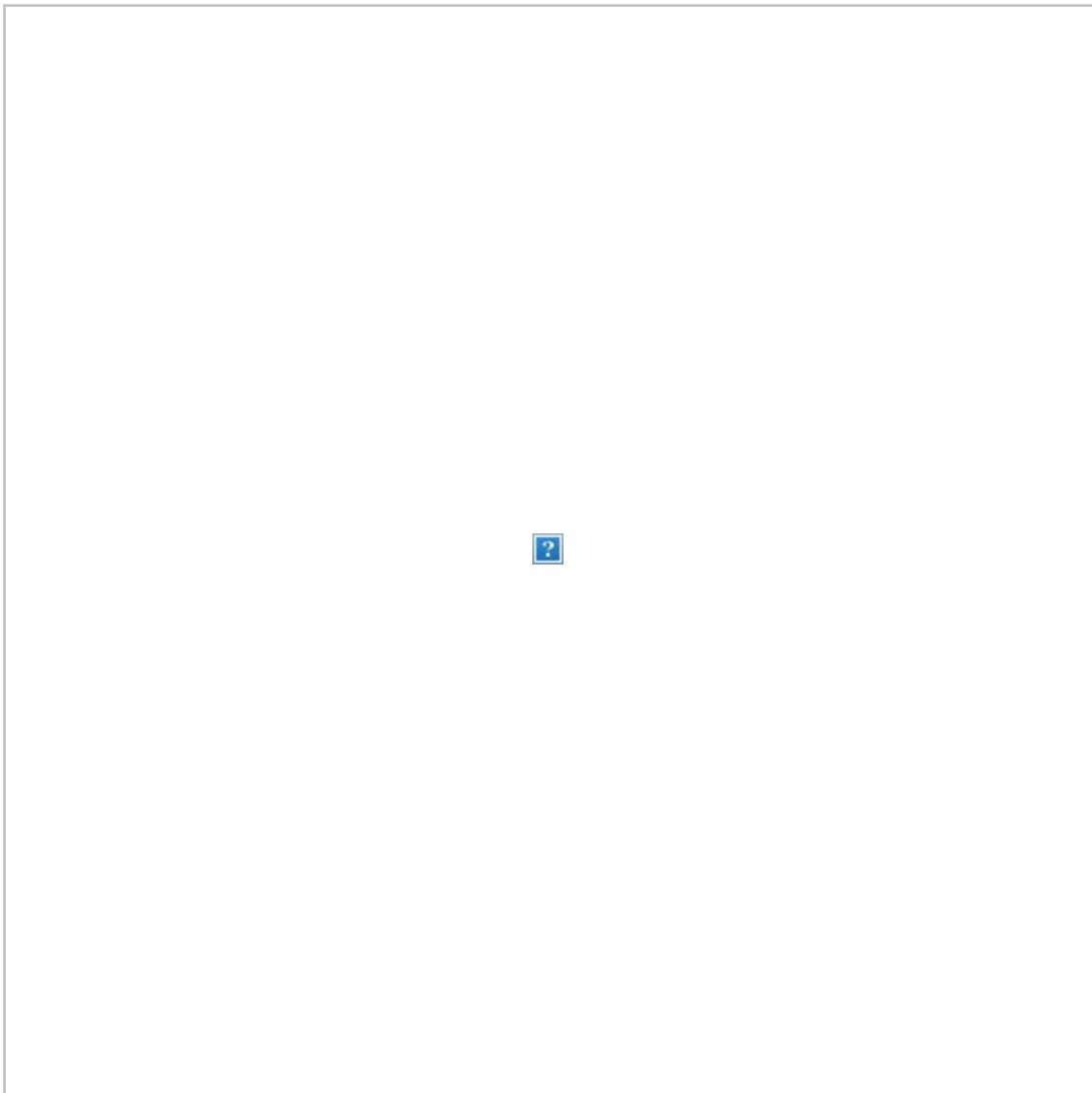




Michelle Obama retweeted a story about a young girl dressing up like the former first lady for her school's Cultural Heroes Day:



An NPR host commented on his employer's reliance on temps:



And a former Obama administration official highlighted an important panel on MSNBC:





## GOOD READS:

-- [“Meet Melania Trump’s enforcer. It’s not her husband,”](#) by Sarah Ellison: “Staffers in [Trump’s] White House are measured by longevity. There’s the November 9th Club, the nickname for those who joined after Trump won the election. There are those who joined the campaign earlier, but only after he secured the nomination. And there are a few who came on board when his campaign was largely viewed as a joke by the

GOP establishment — and everyone else. Few in Trump's White House have a history with him that dates as far back as Stephanie Grisham. For nearly two years, she served as communications director for first lady Melania Trump. A few weeks ago, she received a promotion to deputy chief of staff for communications and has become one of the more powerful figures in the ever-evolving Trump White House. Back in the summer of 2015, she was a lowly press wrangler on Trump's campaign."

-- New York Times, "[What Straight-A Students Get Wrong](#)," by Adam Grant: "The evidence is clear: Academic excellence is not a strong predictor of career excellence. Across industries, research shows that the correlation between grades and job performance is modest in the first year after college and trivial within a handful of years. ... Academic grades rarely assess qualities like creativity, leadership and teamwork skills, or social, emotional and political intelligence. Yes, straight-A students master cramming information and regurgitating it on exams. But career success is rarely about finding the right solution to a problem — it's more about finding the right problem to solve."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**"Suffering pickaxes**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Miami's 'big bad**

and dog poop, Trump's Hollywood star has become a symbolic spectacle," from Rob Kuznia: "Since Trump announced his campaign for the Oval Office in 2015, his Walk of Fame star has been a constant source of conflict and spectacle. The pink pentagram has been destroyed twice, obliterated by a pickax two weeks before the 2016 election and again this past July. It has been a regular target of lesser vandalism: stomping, spitting and dog-pooping. It has been scrawled with pejoratives and spray-painted with swastikas. On Sept.

she-wolf' finishes a 29-year run in Congress," from the Miami Herald: "As Miami's longest-tenured congresswoman [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen] finishes out her final weeks in office, there's still plenty of work to do. Her bill that would limit U.S. loans to the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega until he carries out democratic reforms passed the U.S. Senate, though it still needs final passage in the House of Representatives and [Trump's] signature. Another bill named in her honor would authorize defense and security

20, a few weeks after the shattered star was replaced, a street artist covered it with bars resembling a jail cell. This has become ground zero for the West Coast's grass-roots war over the Trump presidency, a sidewalk attraction for pro- and anti-Trumpers alike. ... Installed in 2007, Trump's star has been guarded by fake Russian soldiers, crowned by a golden toilet and enclosed by a mini-wall lined with mock barbed wire."

spending assistance for Israel, and it has an uncertain fate in the final weeks of this year's Congress. Though Ros-Lehtinen is leaving office, her anti-communist worldview, inspired by a childhood in Cuba, lives on through dozens of former staffers and associates who occupy positions of power in government, notably Sen. Marco Rubio, a former intern. The legacy of her outsized influence on foreign policy and Latin American affairs will continue long after she leaves elected office."

**DAYBOOK:**

**Trump** will have lunch with **Pence**. He has no other events on his public schedule.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:**

**“I think you are beyond the stage that led to the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton, whether or not you think that that was worthy of impeachment.” – Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) on Mueller’s latest court filings. ([ABC News](#))**

**NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington will see a lot of sunshine Monday to partly make up for the cold weather. [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “Sunday’s southern storm gradually pulls away from the North Carolina coast and sunshine returns in its wake. Despite the sun, chilly breezes (around 10 mph) from the north hold high temperatures to the low 40s.”**

**-- The Redskins lost to the Giants 40-16, further hurting the team’s slim playoff chances. ([Les Carpenter](#))**

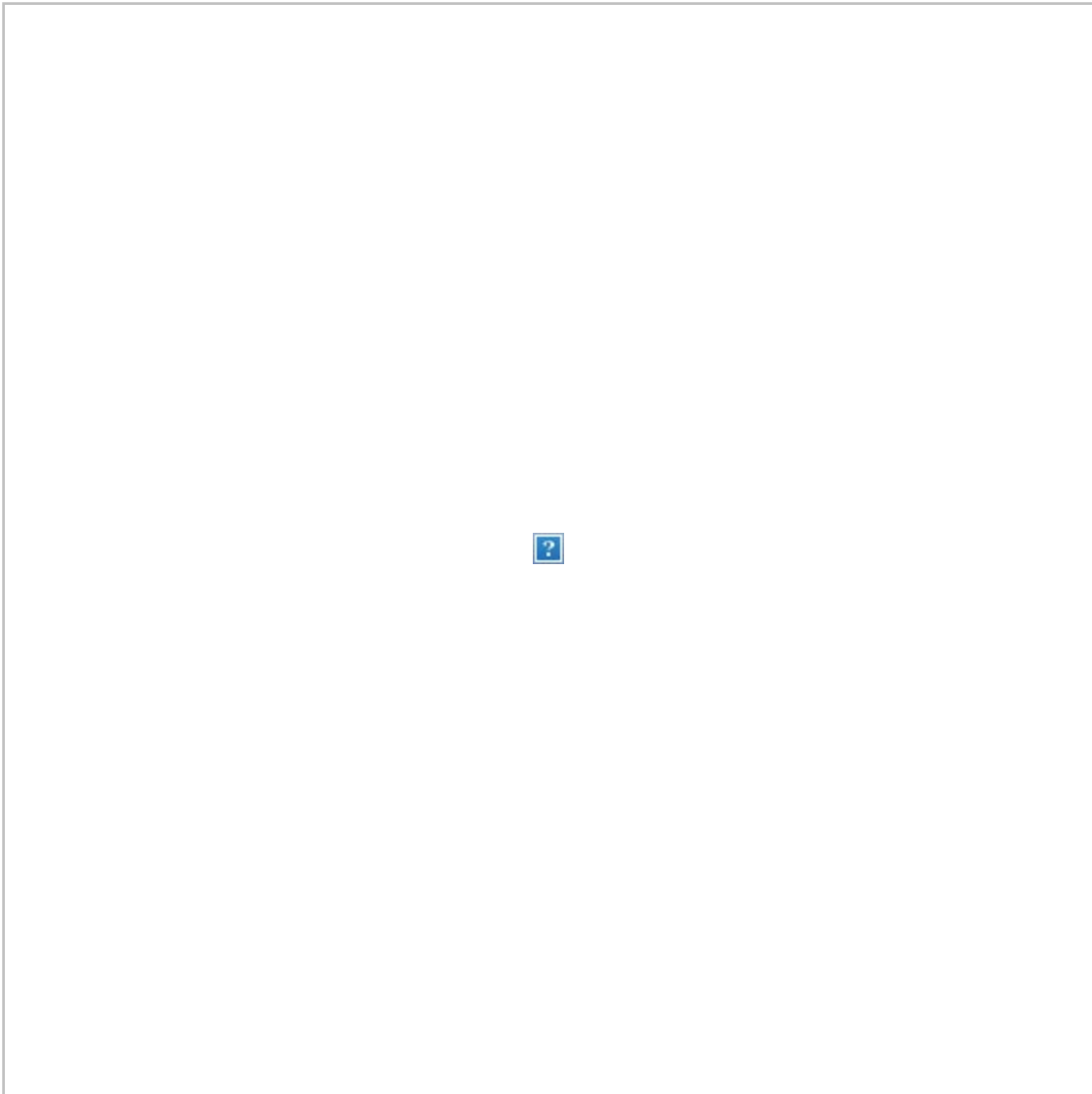
**-- Supporters of Initiative 77 are scrambling to collect**

**signatures in an attempt to overturn the D.C. Council's repeal of the minimum wage hike for tipped workers.** [Fenit Nirappil reports](#): "But a combination of procedural rules, legal challenges and bad timing left referendum supporters with a week to collect about 25,000 signatures required to put the issue back on the ballot. If they can collect enough signatures, the city would hold a special election early next year. Officials with the 'Save Our Vote' coalition have deployed more than 100 signature collectors outside supermarkets, government buildings, bars and even dog parks to pull off what seems like an insurmountable task. They are paying circulators \$3.75 a signature with the possibility of more, quadruple the standard rate. Workers have been working around the clock in a Northwest D.C. house since last Thursday, verifying that signatures belong to registered D.C. voters."

**-- George Washington University officials are pushing to end a project started in 1997 to honor the legacy of Jackie Robinson.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "The decision sparked an outcry from students, donors and teachers who testify to the impact of the project. The Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society, a student group associated with the project, launched a petition that has been signed by 499 people and that urges administrators to allow the project to continue."

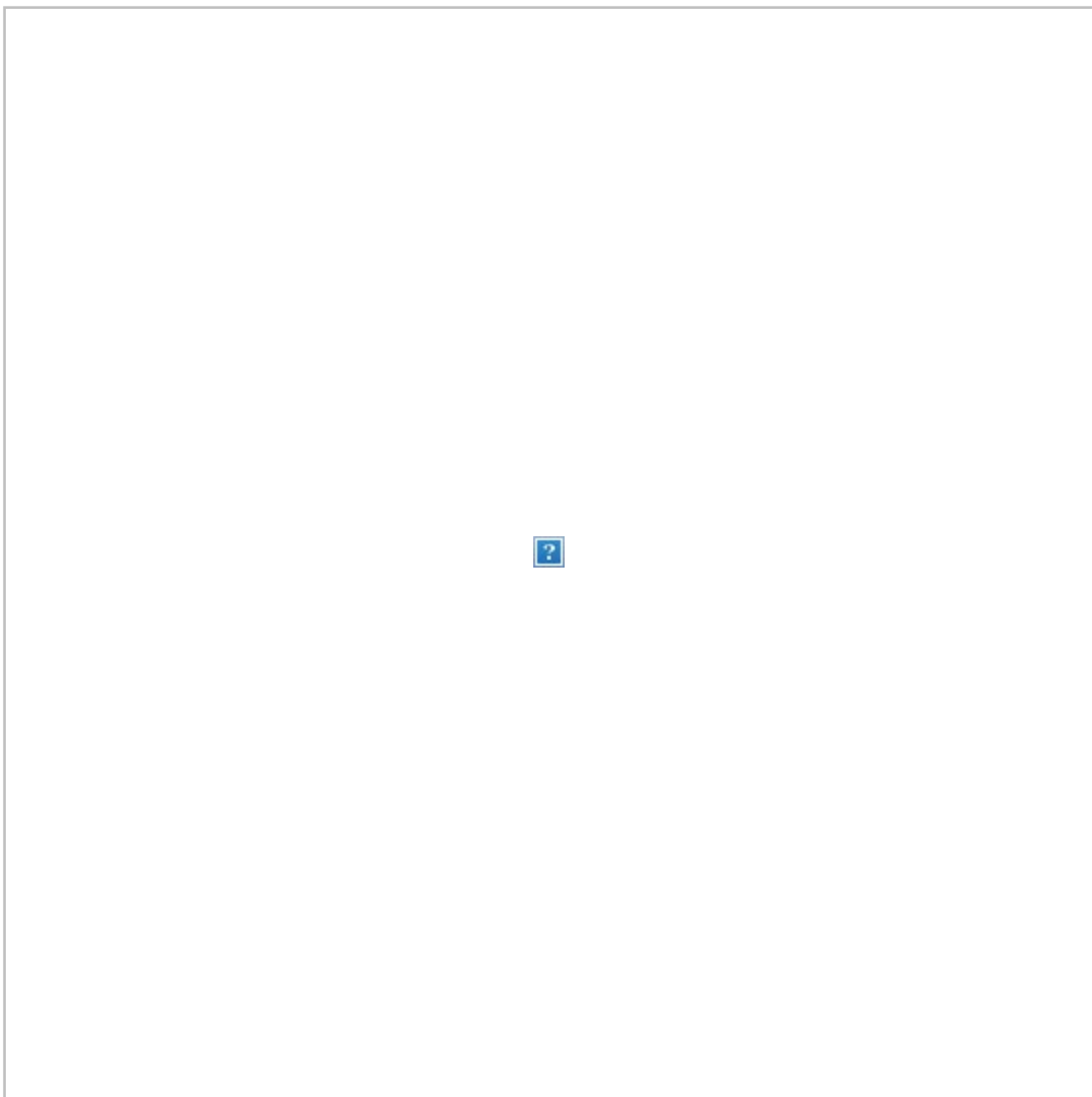
**VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

SNL imagined what would happen if Trump were black:



Them Trumps - SNL

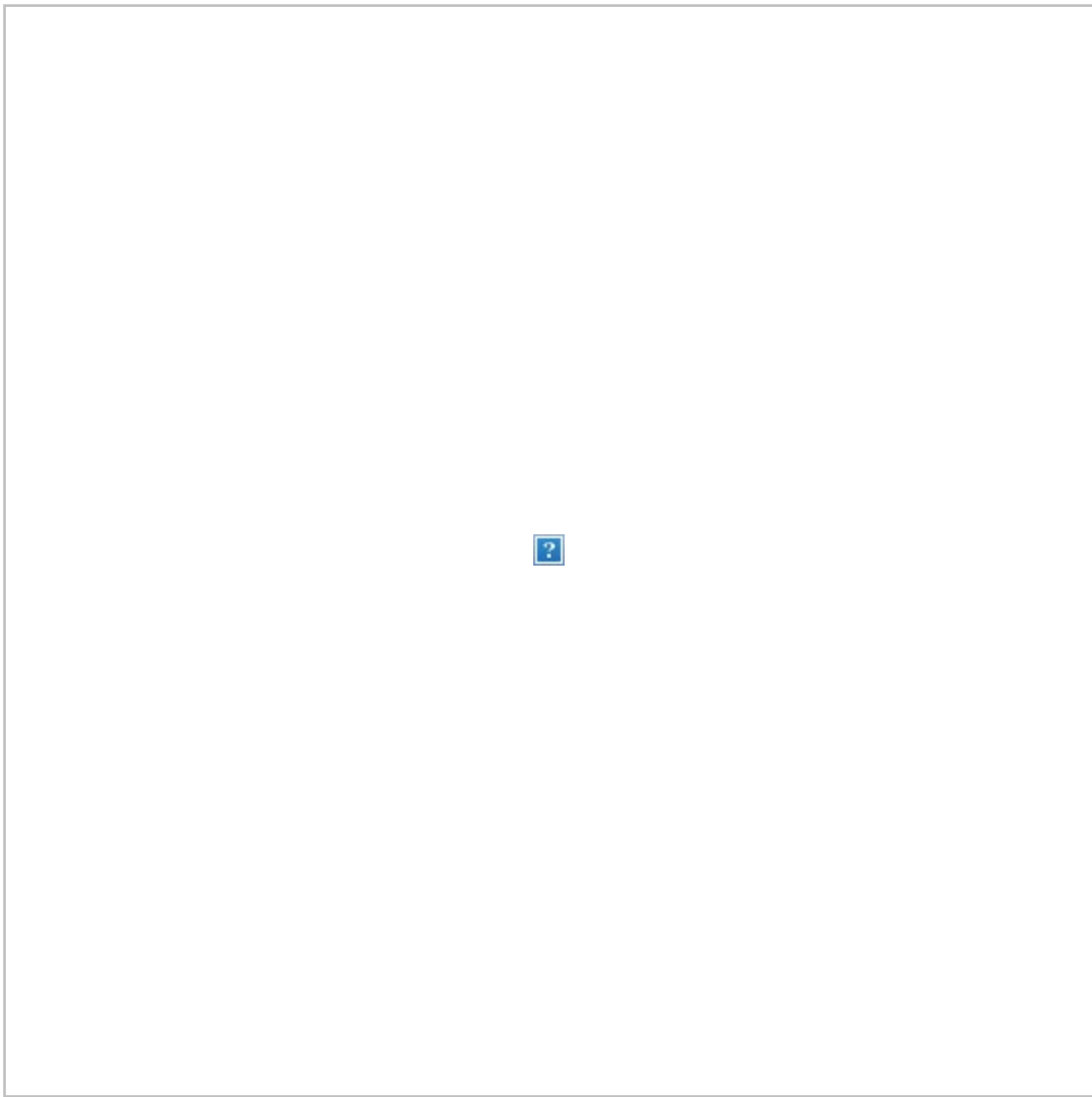
SNL's Michael Che defended Kevin Hart after the comedian stepped down from hosting the Oscars over old tweets containing homophobic language:



Weekend Update: SpaceX Launches Rocket with Cremated Remains - SNL

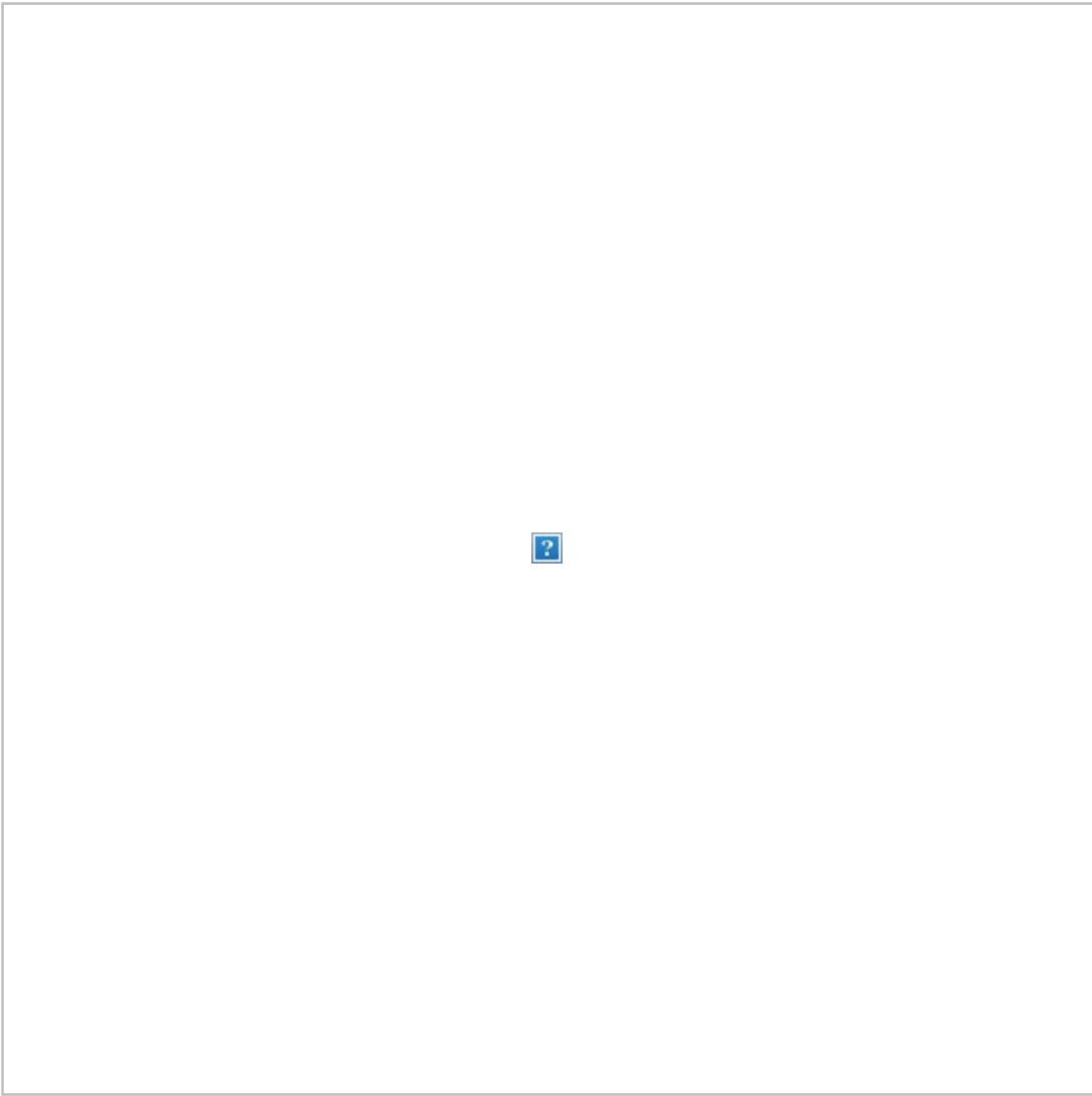
Trump tossed the coin at the Army-Navy game:





Trump tosses the coin for the Army-Navy game

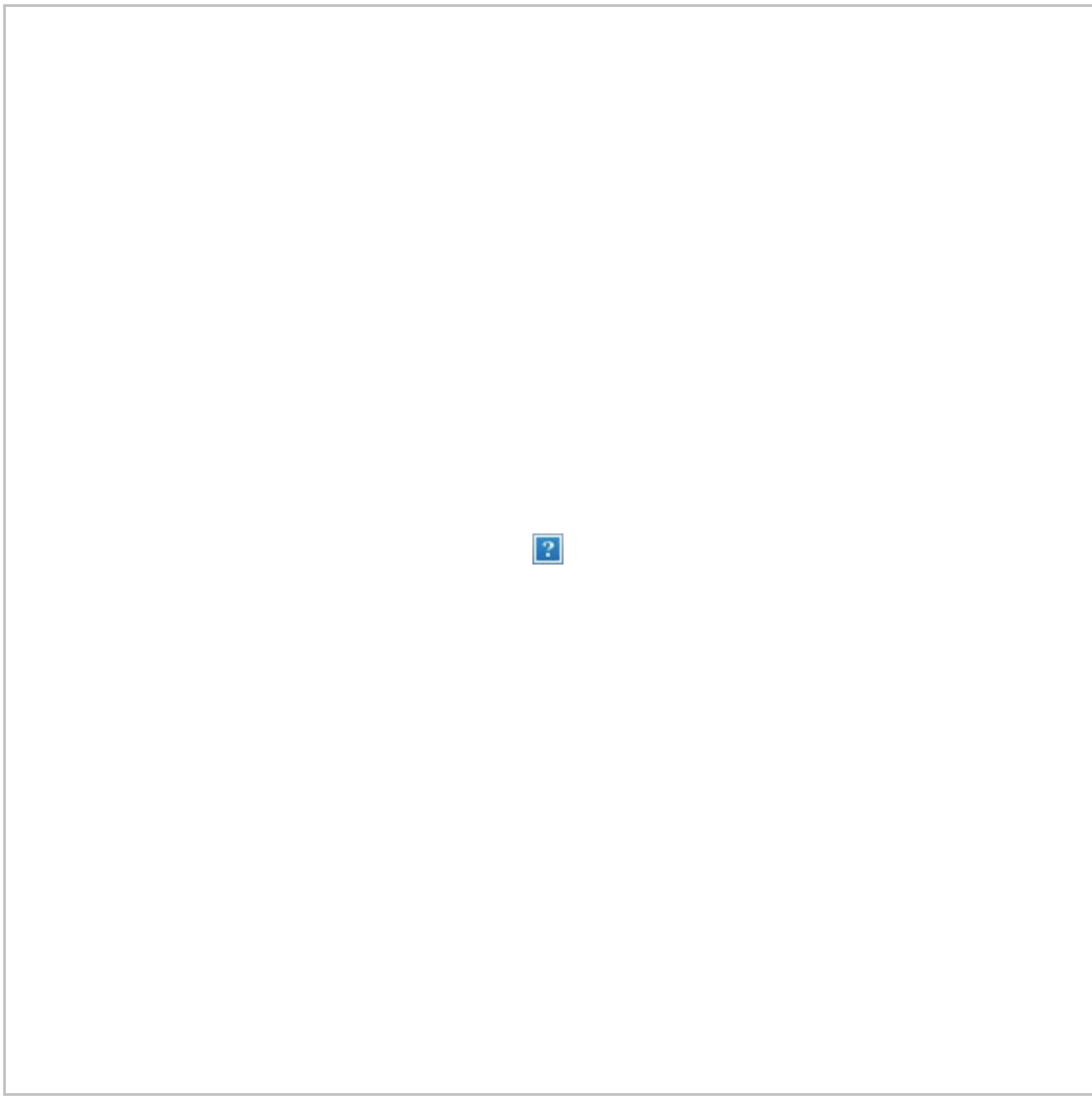
Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez revealed her own Jewish ancestry on the last night of Hanukkah:



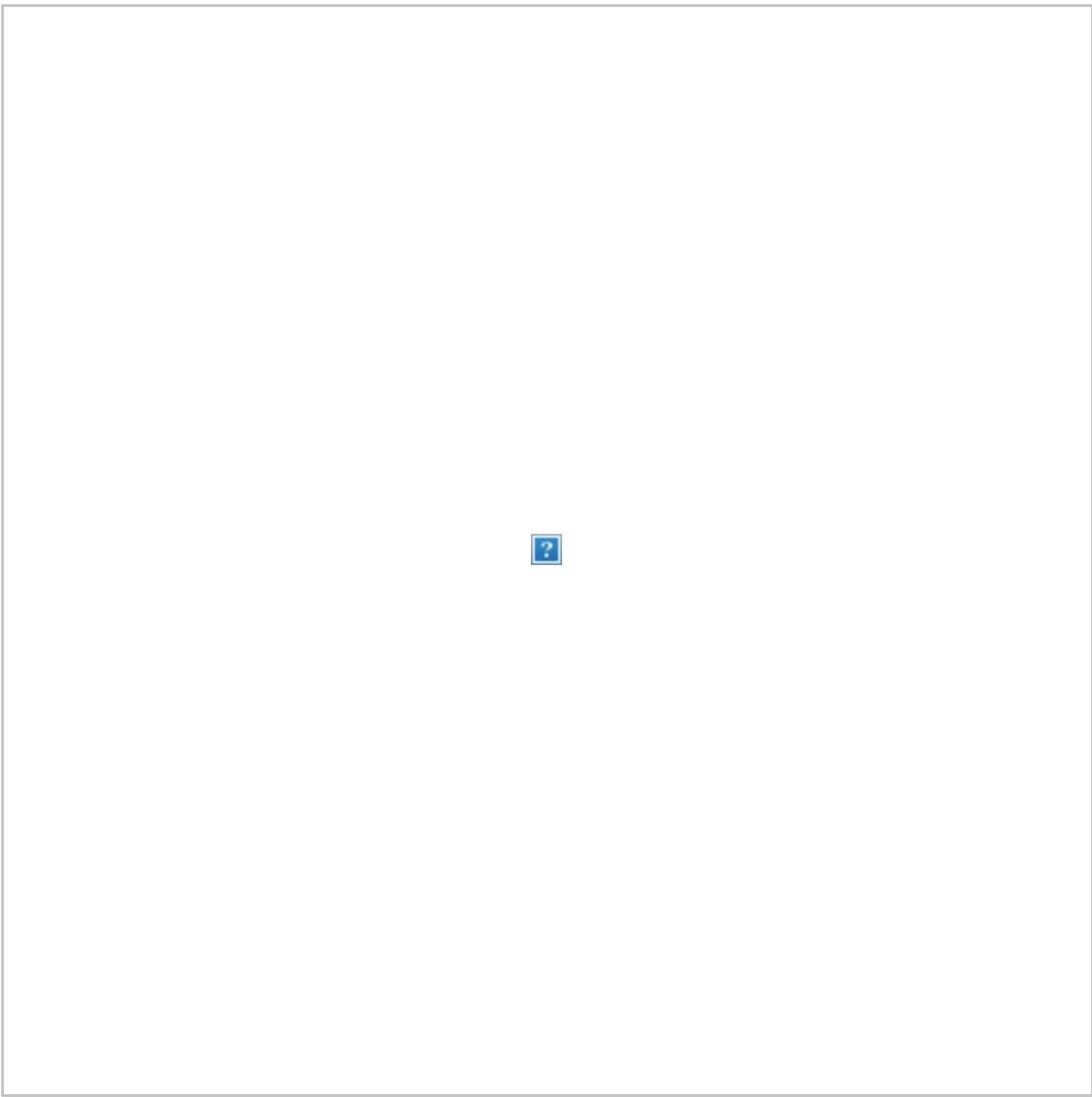
Two men were caught on camera robbing a Salvation Army collection kettle in Minnesota:



Miami beat New England with a wild final play:



And an NBA player's unfortunate interaction with a fan went viral:



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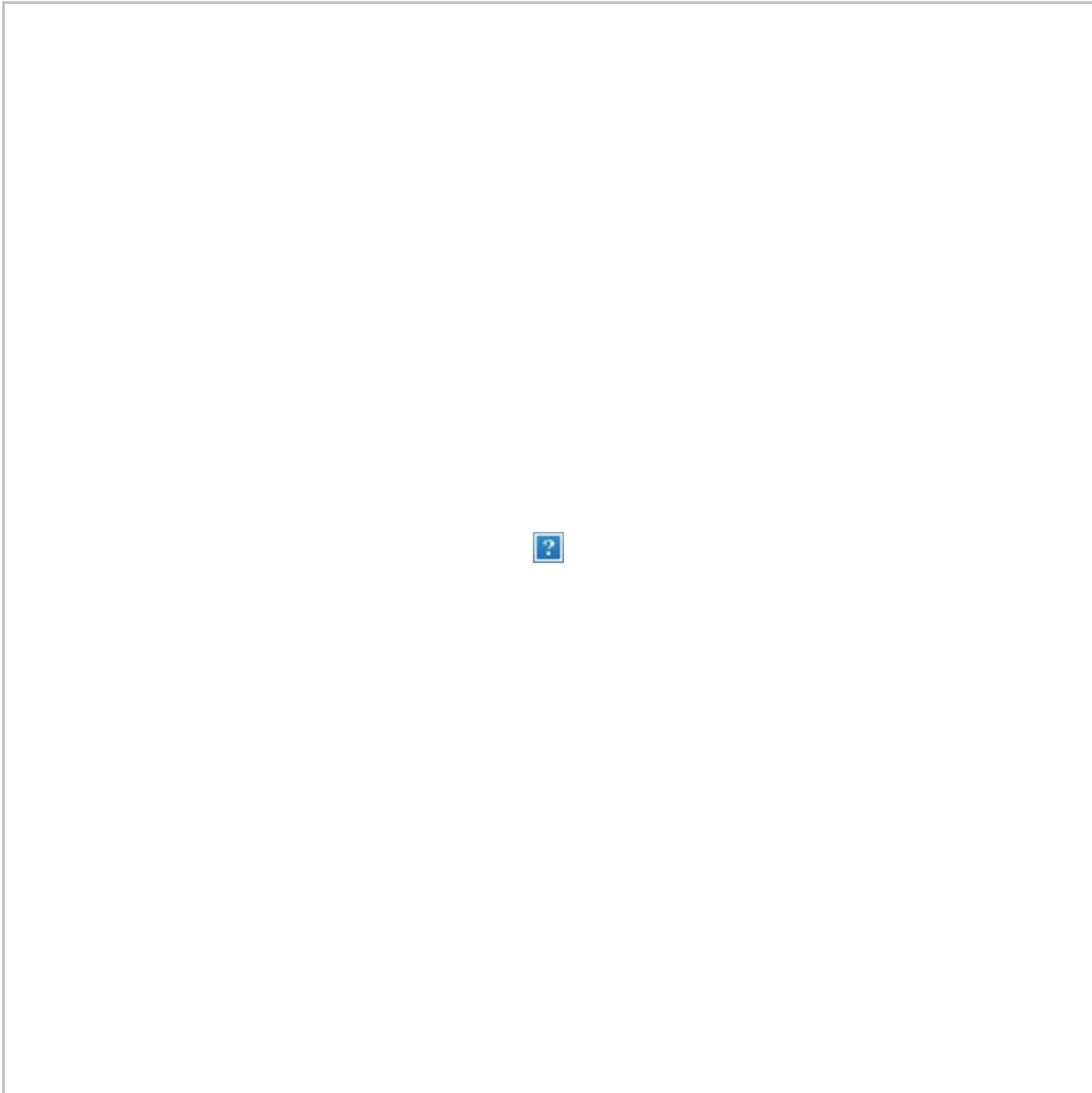
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# The Daily 202

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## Four reasons that even some Trump

# loyalists do not want to be White House chief of staff



A look back at John Kelly's relationship with President Trump



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve*

**THE BIG IDEA:** There's a tweet for everything. "3 chiefs of staff in less than 3 years of being President," Donald Trump posted in 2012. "Part of the reason why

@BarackObama can't manage to pass his agenda."

But Barack Obama never had a problem finding talented people eager to take the job, and a 36-year-old certainly never snubbed the previous president the way that Nick Ayers did on Sunday. Now, with two months left in his second year, President Trump is back at square one as he searches for a third chief of staff.

**Advisers to Trump were "stunned" that Vice President Pence's chief turned down the chance to replace John Kelly**, claiming he wanted to spend more time with his family in Georgia, Maggie Haberman reports on the front page of the [New York Times](#): "One former senior administration official called it a humiliation for Mr. Trump and his adult children, an emotion that the president tries to avoid at all costs. ... Two people close to Mr. Trump said that a news release announcing Mr. Ayers's appointment had been drafted, and that the president had wanted to announce it as soon as possible."

-- **Who now?** "Trump's new list of potential chiefs includes Office of Management and Budget Director **Mick Mulvaney** ... and Rep. **Mark Meadows** (R-N.C.), a leader of the conservative House Freedom Caucus," [per The Post's Felicia Sonmez, Josh Dawsey and Damian Paletta](#). "Acting Attorney General **Matthew G. Whitaker** and Trade Representative **Robert E. Lighthizer** were



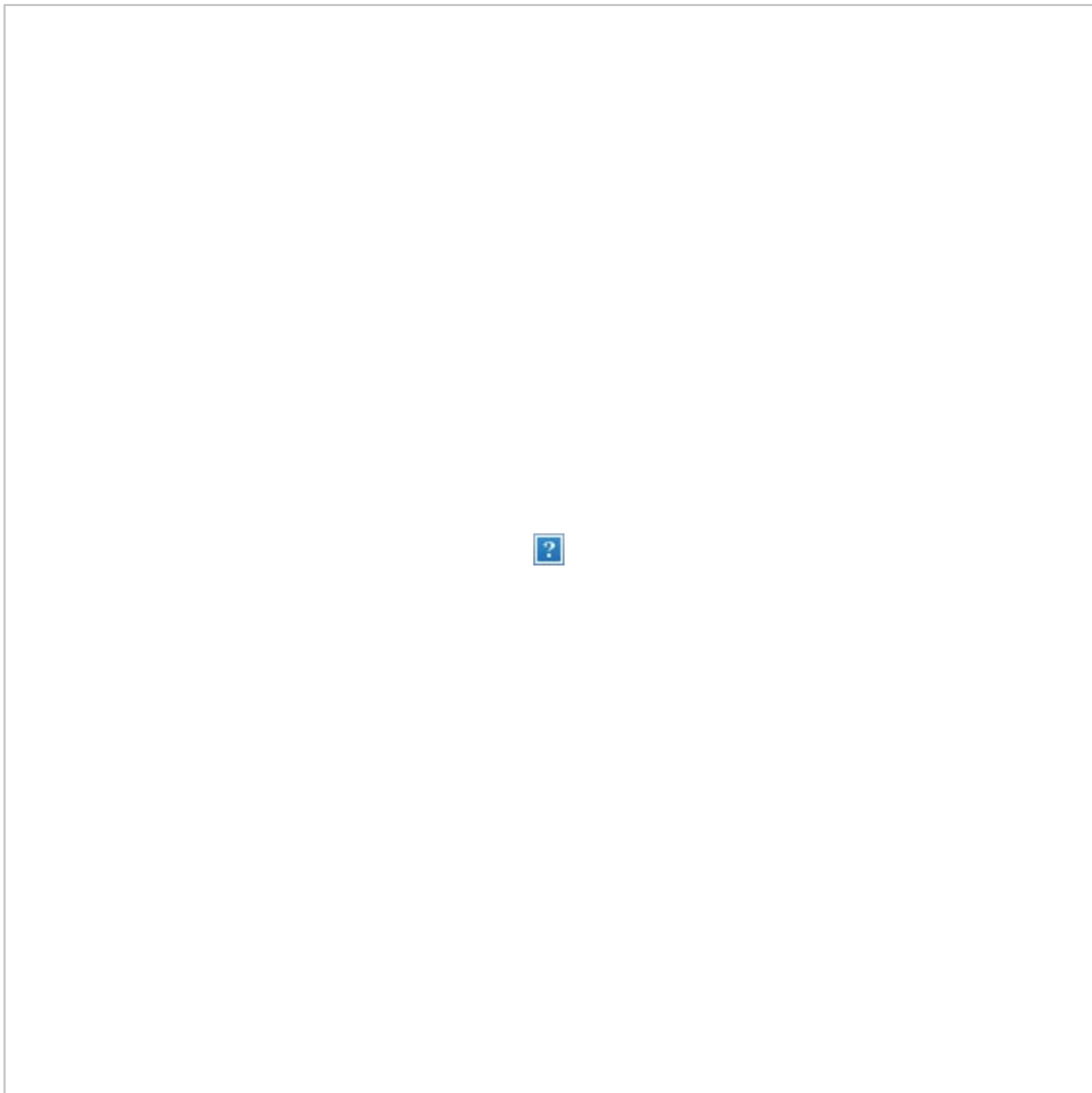
also said to be under consideration. But a senior administration official, who spoke privately and was not authorized to discuss the talks, said there was reluctance to move Lighthizer into the role [because] he is integral to negotiations with China over trade. Another senior administration official said that Mulvaney and Treasury Secretary **Steven Mnuchin** have both expressed internally that they aren't seeking the job but could change their minds if Trump pleads with them."

The [Associated Press](#) reports that Mulvaney is not interested in becoming chief of staff, citing a person close to him: "Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary. ... A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff. ... Trump's former deputy campaign manager, **David Bossie**, is also among the names being floated by some close to the White House. ... Pence's deputy chief of staff, Jarrod Agen, is expected to assume Ayers' role for the vice president."

"Former Gov. **Chris Christie** of New Jersey, who as a onetime United States attorney could help Mr. Trump in an impeachment fight, was also being mentioned," per the Times.

"In recent days, another name for chief of staff has

cropped up among Trump's advisers: **Wayne Berman**, senior managing director and head of global government affairs at the Blackstone Group," per [Politico](#). "Berman, who served as a top political aide at the Commerce Department under President George H.W. Bush, is close to Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, who remains one of Trump's closest confidants in the business world."



John Kelly, Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner and Nick Ayers listen as President Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting in March. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

**-- For anyone, under any president, this is a hard job with a Herculean learning curve. But there are four unique reasons that this position is especially foreboding for ambitious apparatchiks, even Trump loyalists.**

### **1) Ivanka cannot be managed.**

Kelly clashed constantly with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, the president's daughter and son-in-law. They technically reported to him, but they had a direct channel to the president and maneuvered behind the scenes to replace him as chief.

"The couple told others privately that Kelly shared damaging stories about them and had not always served the president well," [Josh, Seung Min Kim and Phil Rucker reported](#) on Saturday. "For his part, Kelly joked that the couple was 'playing government,' and he said they should never have been brought into the White House — and that the pair thought they did not have to follow the traditional rules."

It's very hard, if not impossible, to manage your boss's kids. The power dynamic will always be challenging, no matter how clearly roles and responsibilities are delineated. This is why many public companies and agencies have nepotism rules.

Ayers had carefully cultivated an alliance with Javanka, who went to bat for him with Trump, even as other senior administration officials lobbied against him directly to the president. But then there's this wrinkle: Two sources tell [CNN](#) that one reason Ayers did not take the job was because of resistance from Melania Trump. The first lady has been more assertive recently, and she recently got the deputy national security adviser fired after a conflict that seemed to stem from a dispute over seating arrangements on a flight to Africa.

Just as in any West Wing, there are other competing power centers to worry about, as well. Then there's the 2020 reelection campaign, which will have offices in New York and Northern Virginia. There are also seemingly dozens of outside friends and advisers whom Trump phones regularly for advice.

The president has a long history, going back to his time managing Atlantic City casinos, of pitting staff against each other because he thinks it means he gets better advice and prevents anyone else from becoming too powerful. Remember the epic clashes between then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in 2016?



'Undisciplined, challenging individual': Tillerson opens up on working with Trump

## **2) Trump will not be managed.**

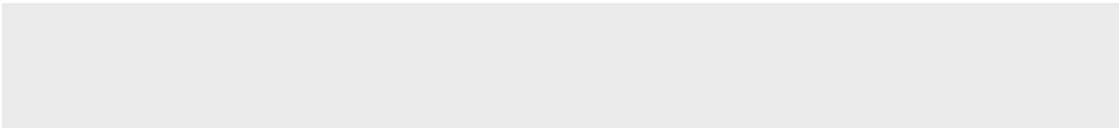
A chief of staff must manage both down and up, but the 72-year-old in the Oval Office seems pretty set in his habits. Trump also wants it both ways. He wants his White House to run “like a fine-tuned machine,” as he’s said it does, but – ever the showman – he also likes the reality TV vibe, where people are constantly left wondering where they stand and if they’ll get written off in

the next episode.

To put it mildly, Trump doesn't sweat the small stuff. Former secretary of state Rex Tillerson [described](#) some of his frustrations with advising an "undisciplined" president during an event in Houston last Thursday night. "What was challenging for me coming from the disciplined, highly process-oriented ExxonMobil corporation," Tillerson said, was "to go to work for a man who is pretty undisciplined, doesn't like to read, doesn't read briefing reports, doesn't like to get into the details of a lot of things, but rather just kind of says, 'This is what I believe.' ... So often the president would say, 'Here's what I want to do, and here's how I want to do it' and I would have to say to him, 'Mr. President, I understand what you want to do, but you can't do it that way. It violates the law.' "

The president responded hours later by saying that he fired Tillerson because he "didn't have the mental capacity needed": "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell."

As far as the president is concerned, nothing is ever his fault. The guy in the adjacent office is a natural scapegoat, maybe even more so than whoever is at Foggy Bottom.





CONTENT FROM BANK OF AMERICA

## How to finance a cleaner planet

In 2018, Bank of America issued its fourth and largest green bond for \$2.25 billion. Learn more about this innovative way of financing a more sustainable future.





President Trump speaks on the phone in the Oval Office, joined by then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, Vice President Pence, senior adviser Steve Bannon, Communications Director Sean Spicer and national security adviser Michael Flynn. Only Pence, whose job is protected by the Constitution, remains. (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

**3) With so many storm clouds on the horizon, the odds are good that the next chief will need to retain his own lawyers.**

House Democrats get their gavels, and subpoena power, in just three weeks. Whoever gets this job will almost



certainly need to hire a personal attorney at some point with the White House under so much scrutiny from so many quarters, even if they do nothing wrong. [CNN](#) reported last week, for example, that Kelly responded to questions from special counsel Bob Mueller's team in recent months after initially resisting an interview.

No one but Trump fully knows how great his legal exposure might be on *L'Affaire Russe*. The president recently [defended](#) his efforts to make business deals with Russians tied to the Kremlin during the campaign – which he falsely, vigorously and repeatedly denied at the time – as “very legal & very cool.”

“The White House is adopting what one official termed a ‘shrugged shoulders’ strategy for the Mueller findings, calculating that most GOP base voters will believe whatever the president tells them to believe,” [Bob Costa and Rucker reported](#) in Sunday's paper. “But some allies fret that the president's coalition could crack apart under the growing pressure. Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump strategist who helped him navigate the most arduous phase of his 2016 campaign, predicted 2019 would be a year of ‘siege warfare’ and cast the president's inner circle as naively optimistic and unsophisticated. ... Rather than building a war room to manage the intersecting crises as past administrations have done, the Trump White House is understaffed, stuck in a bunker mentality and largely resigned to a plan to

wing it. Political and communications operatives are mostly taking their cues from the president and letting him drive the message with his spontaneous broadsides.”

Then there’s the specter of impeachment proceedings. Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), who will chair the House Judiciary Committee in the next Congress, used the I-word on the Sunday shows. Discussing the campaign finance violations laid out in the Friday court filings about longtime Trump consigliere Michael Cohen, Nadler told CNN’s Jake Tapper: “They would be impeachable offenses. Whether they’re important enough to justify an impeachment is a different question. But certainly, they’re impeachable offenses, because, even though they were committed before the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office.”

Don’t forget the economy. Some experts believe we’re headed for a slowdown, maybe even a [recession](#). The stock market has recently wiped out its 2018 gains, and investors are [no longer buying](#) on the dip the way they had been. A handshake agreement has led to a fragile détente in the trade war with China, but it could escalate again quickly. The Federal Reserve raising interest rates has drawn Trump’s ire, and the stimulus from last year’s tax cuts is running out.

Ayers reportedly plans to lead the pro-Trump super PAC

for 2020, which walls him off from some of the aforementioned drama. “Another factor,” per Haberman: “His ascension to the top West Wing job would have meant newfound scrutiny of his personal finances — last year he reported a net worth of \$12.2 million to \$54.8 million, a sizable sum for a political operative in his 30s who has amassed his own fortune. He accumulated his wealth partly through a web of political and consulting companies in which he has held ownership stakes.”



President Trump steps off Air Force One on July 28, 2017, after firing Reince Priebus via tweet. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

#### **4) The risk of public humiliation is high.**

Few who have gone into the administration at a senior level have emerged stronger from the experience. That's not how it usually works. Typically a top White House job ensures a lifetime of lucrative opportunities. Some ex-Trumpers have struggled to get good jobs on the outside.

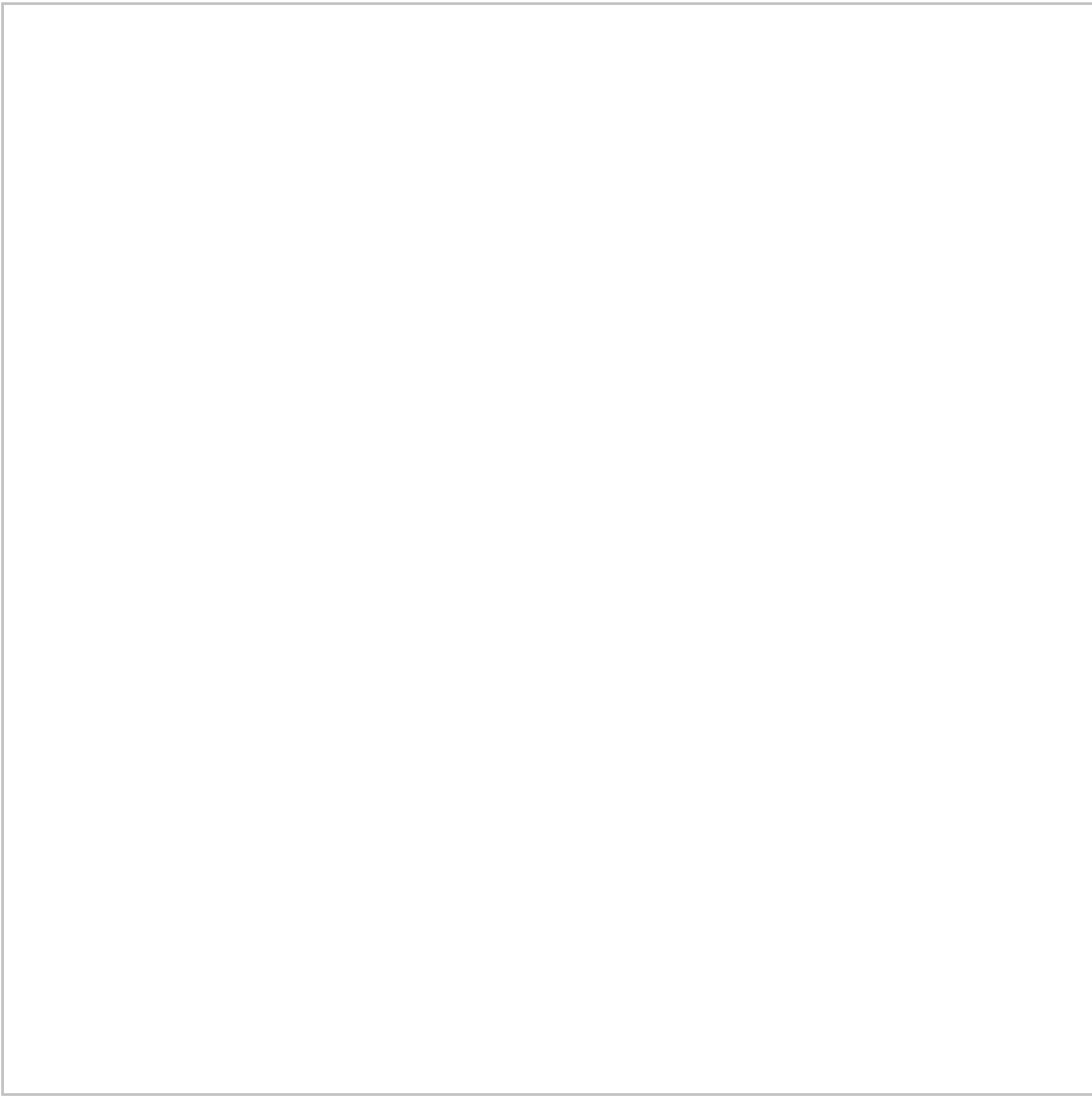
Ayers wanted to hold the chief job for only a few months and then transition out, but the president wanted him to be available through 2020. One reason he reportedly wanted to be a short-timer is to avoid months of speculative stories about whether he was on the verge of being pushed out – indignities that both of Trump's chiefs suffered through.

Trump unceremoniously ousted his first chief of staff Reince Priebus, a former chairman of the Republican National Committee, on a rainy Friday night in July 2017. After Air Force One touched down at Andrews Air Force base, Priebus was sitting in a Suburban with senior policy adviser Stephen Miller and social media director Dan Scavino. When Trump tweeted that Kelly would replace him, Miller and Scavino hopped out of the vehicle. Priebus was left alone, and his Suburban [peeled away](#) from the motorcade – which continued onto the White House without him.

Priebus later debriefed Chris Whipple, the author of “The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency,” on the conflict and disarray in the White House. “Take everything you’ve heard and multiply it by 50,” Priebus told him for a piece that ran [in Vanity Fair](#).

“People mistake me for a laid-back guy from the Midwest,” he continued. “I’m much more aggressive, and much more of a knife fighter. Playing the inside game is what I do.”

But the knife fighter from Kenosha couldn’t avoid being stabbed in the back by his colleagues.



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Minerva Cisneros was killed by her partner, Arturo Sigala-Villavicencio, 28, on Christmas in 2015. (Ilana Panich-Linsman for The Washington Post)

## GET SMART FAST:

1. **Nearly half of women murdered over the past decade were killed by an intimate partner,** according to a Washington Post analysis. More than one-third of all men who killed an intimate partner were known to be a threat *before* the murder. ([Katie Zezima, Deanna Paul, Steven Rich, Julie Tate and](#)

[Jennifer Jenkins](#))

2. **An antitrust lawsuit alleging price-fixing in the generic-drug industry has expanded into an investigation of at least 16 companies and 300 drugs.** A federal prosecutor leading the probe described the industry as “most likely the largest cartel in the history of the United States.” ([Christopher Rowland](#))
3. **Former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn was indicted after allegations of financial wrongdoing.** Japanese prosecutors said that, over four years, Ghosn underreported his income by 50 percent. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
4. **A major winter storm caused power outages and flight cancellations in the Southeast.** States of emergency were declared in Virginia and North Carolina as nearly half a million people were left without power and the region's schools [announced](#) closures. ([Luz Lazo](#))
5. **Authorities are investigating a string of arson attacks targeting the worship centers of Jehovah’s Witnesses.** No motive has been uncovered for the attacks, which have already destroyed two of the pacifist religion’s worship centers. ([Cleve R. Wootson Jr.](#))



6. **Research shows 2018 has been the worst on record for gun violence in schools.** According to the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, 94 school shootings occurred this year — a 60-percent increase from the previous high of 59 set in 2006. ([the Guardian](#))
7. **The first U.S. teachers strike against a charter school operator came to a close in Chicago.** More than 500 teachers will return to work today after reaching an agreement with Acero schools on pay raises and the school calendar. ([Associated Press](#))
8. **NPR's reliance on temporary workers has prompted complaints of exploitation.** NPR's union said between 20 and 22 percent of the public broadcaster's union-covered newsroom are temp workers, making it an outlier among broadcast media organizations. ([Paul Farhi](#))
9. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a holiday-themed reminder not to eat raw cookie dough.** The agency warned that flour is a “raw agricultural product” and can contain bacteria linked to E. coli. ([Newsweek](#))



President Trump speaks with California officials as they view damage from the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

## **THE PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES:**

**-- The Trump administration opposed a move to endorse a dire report on climate change at a United Nations conference in Poland. [David Nakamura and Darryl Fears report](#): “Arguments erupted Saturday night before a United Nations working group focused on science and technology, where **the United States****

**teamed with Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait** to challenge language that would have welcomed the findings of the landmark report, which said that the world has barely 10 years to cut carbon emissions by nearly half to avoid catastrophic warming. ‘There was going to be an agreement to welcome the . . . report,’ said Jake Schmidt, the managing director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s international program, who is in Poland. ‘The U.S. wanted to ‘note’ it, which is saying in essence that we know it’s out there but we have no comment.’”

**-- Bowing to pressure from antiabortion groups, the Trump administration halted a government-run study using fetal tissue to try to find a cure for HIV.** [Amy Goldstein and Lenny Bernstein report](#): “A senior scientist at a National Institutes of Health laboratory in Montana told colleagues that the Health and Human Services Department ‘has directed me to discontinue procuring fetal tissue’ from a firm that is the only available source, according to an email he sent to a collaborator in late September. **‘This effectively stops all of our research to discover a cure for HIV,’ the researcher wrote.** The research disruptions might extend to a handful of other labs using fetal tissue, all of which are part of NIH ... **The shutdown of the HIV research at the federal lab in Montana ... was never disclosed publicly by government officials, who have forbidden affected researchers from discussing what happened.**”

**-- Trump's trade war, as well as developments in the Russia investigation, is creating market volatility.**

[From the New York Times's Matt Phillips](#): "The trade war has already taken a toll on large chunks of the global economy. China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, is growing at its slowest rate in nearly a decade. The export-driven economies of Japan and Germany — the third and fourth biggest economies in the world, respectively — both contracted in the third quarter. The United States has so far been an outlier. ... But even in the United States, there are emerging pockets of weakness, particularly in parts of the economy that are sensitive to rising borrowing costs."

**-- The possibility of a partial government shutdown next week still looms. [The New York Times's Julie](#)**

[Hirschfeld Davis and Emily Cochrane report](#): "The deepest impasse — and the one with the greatest potential to prompt a year-end breakdown — is over Mr. Trump's demand for \$5 billion for a wall on the United States' southern border. ... Mr. Trump is set to host [Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi] at the White House on Tuesday for a meeting that will test the new dynamic between a president weakened by midterm election losses and empowered Democrats working to define their party for the era of divided government. ... Beyond the wall fight and the bare-minimum endeavor of keeping the government fully open, a perennial year-end appetite for

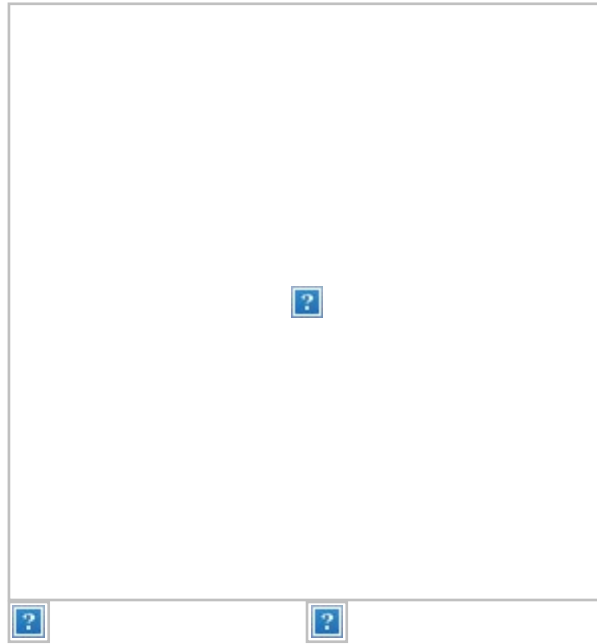
legislating has taken hold on Capitol Hill.”

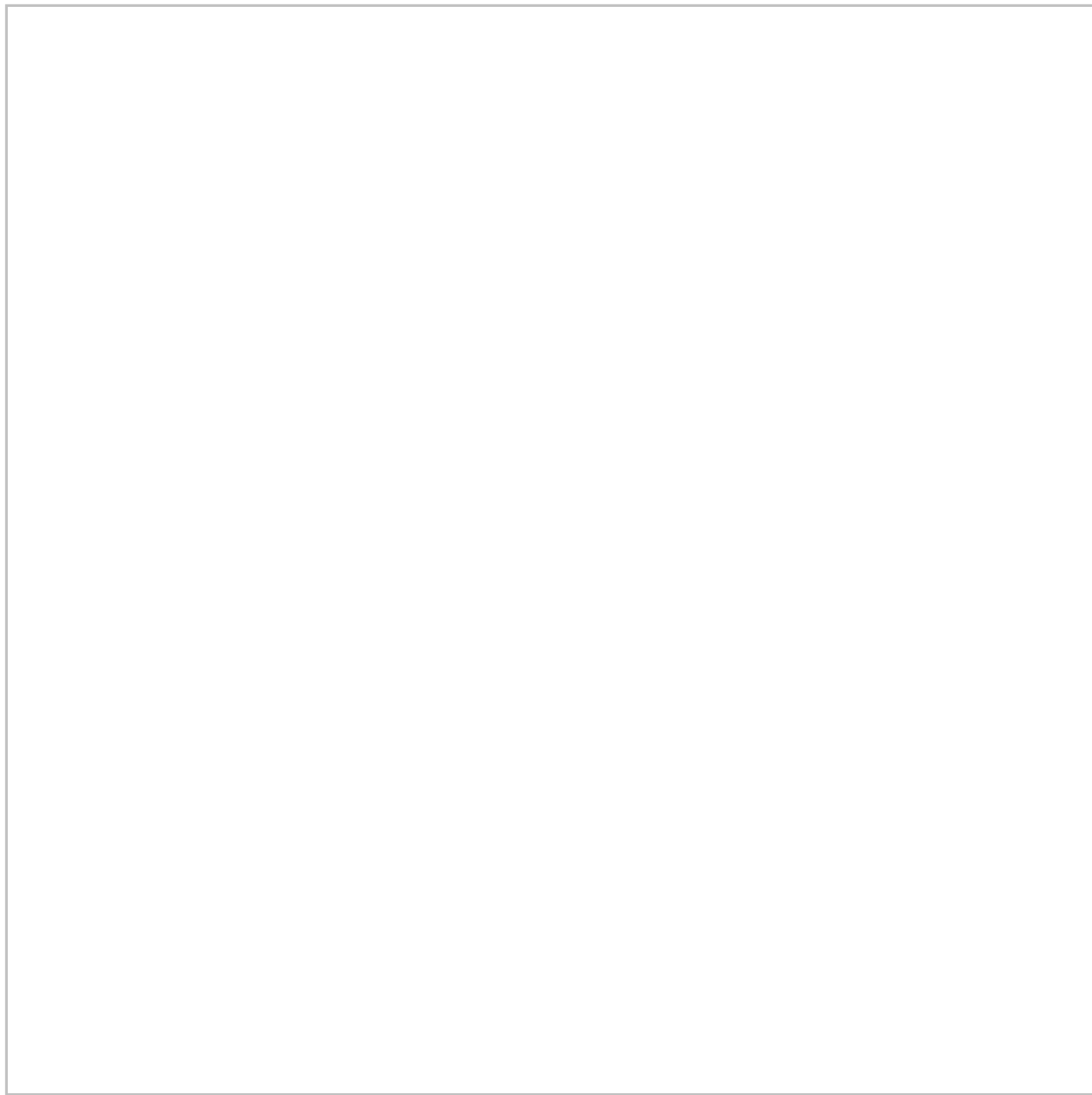
**-- Trump has reversed his support for a cut in defense spending. [Politico's Wesley Morgan reports](#):**

“Trump has told Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to submit a \$750 billion budget proposal for fiscal 2020 ... The \$750 billion figure emerged from a meeting Tuesday at the White House among Trump, Mattis and the Republican chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees ... That would dwarf the \$733 billion budget proposal Mattis and other top military leaders have been fighting to preserve and would represent a stunning about-face for a president who recently called the fiscal 2019 top line of \$716 billion for defense spending ‘crazy.’”

**-- A growing number of incoming lawmakers, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), are casting a spotlight on how Capitol Hill treats its interns and staffers. [Elise Viebeck reports](#):** “When [Ocasio-Cortez] said last week that she would not only pay her interns, but also provide more than the minimum wage, the news had an immediate impact. ... Congress performs terribly on metrics related to staff diversity, workplace protections and employee pay and benefits. Advocates warn that the system is built to accept only the most privileged young people — often white, moneyed and with connections — who later fill the pipeline for Washington’s political and business establishment. The system has gone unchallenged for years. But scrutiny by

Ocasio-Cortez and her peers after the recent midterm elections is stirring hopes that Capitol Hill might be ready for change.”





Inside the filings: Court documents reveal new contact between Trump's inner circle and Russian

## **THERE'S A BEAR IN THE WOODS:**

**-- Records show at least 14 Trump associates had contact with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign and presidential transition. [Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Carol D. Leonnig report](#): “Again and again and again, over the course of [Trump’s] 18-month campaign for the presidency, Russian citizens made contact with his closest family**

members and friends, as well as figures on the periphery of his orbit. Some offered to help his campaign and his real estate business. Some offered dirt on his Democratic opponent. Repeatedly, Russian nationals suggested Trump should hold a peacemaking sit-down with Vladimir Putin — and offered to broker such a summit. ... [T]he mounting number of communications that have been revealed occurred against the backdrop of ‘sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the U.S. presidential election,’ as [Bob] Mueller’s prosecutors wrote in a court filing last week."

**-- Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen will be sentenced on Wednesday, as federal prosecutors in Manhattan appear to shift their focus toward the Trump Organization’s possible participation in campaign-finance violations. [The New York Times’s Ben Protess, William K. Rashbaum and Maggie Haberman report](#):** “Mr. Cohen, Mr. Trump’s self-described fixer, has provided assistance in that inquiry, which is separate from the investigation by the special counsel ... In addition to implicating Mr. Trump in the payments to the two women, Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that the company’s chief financial officer was involved in discussions about them, a claim that is now a focus of the inquiry, according to [people briefed on the matter] ...

**“Mr. Cohen has told prosecutors that he believes Mr. Trump personally approved the company’s decision**



**to reimburse him for one of the payments.** ... [T]here is no indication that anyone at the company will face charges in connection with the inquiry. But in recent weeks, the prosecutors contacted the company to renew a request they had made this year for documents and other materials ... The precise nature of the materials sought was unclear, but the renewed request is further indication that prosecutors continue to focus on the president's company even as the case against Mr. Cohen comes to a close."

**-- Legal experts remain divided on whether a sitting president can be indicted, a question that will carry great weight for Trump moving forward.** [The AP's Michael Balsamo reports](#): "The Supreme Court has never ruled on whether the president can be indicted or whether the president can be subpoenaed for testimony. The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which provides legal advice and guidance to executive branch agencies, has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted. Two Justice Department reports, one in 1973 and one in 2000, came to the same conclusion. Those reports essentially concluded that the president's responsibilities are so important that an indictment would pose too many risks for the government to function properly. Trump's lawyers have said that [Mueller] plans to adhere to that guidance, though Mueller's office has never independently confirmed that."

**-- Conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi sued Mueller for alleged constitutional violations and leaking grand jury secrets.** [Politico's Josh Gerstein reports](#): "Corsi's new suit against Mueller also accuses the special prosecutor of trying to badger Corsi into giving false testimony that he served as a conduit between Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to then-candidate [Trump]. ... Corsi is demanding \$100 million in actual damages and \$250 million in punitive damages for injury to his reputation."

**-- Former White House counsel John Dean said the details revealed in Mueller's court filings give Congress "little choice" but to start impeachment proceedings.** "I don't know that this will forever disappear into some dark hole of unprosecutable presidents," Dean said. "I think it will resurface in the Congress. I think what this totality of [Friday's] filings show that the House is going to have little choice, the way this is going, other than to start impeachment proceedings." ([Michael Brice-Saddler](#))



Are new Russia probe findings a dire sign for Trump? Lawmakers weigh in.

**-- Republican lawmakers defended Trump on the Sunday shows amid his escalating legal troubles.**

[Felicia Sonmez and Ariana Eunjung Cha report](#): “In an interview on NBC News’s ‘Meet the Press,’ Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) played down the alleged campaign finance violations detailed by prosecutors, arguing that such missteps should not be ‘over-criminalized.’ ... He added that if campaign finance violations are aggressively prosecuted, ‘we’re going to become a banana republic,

where every president gets prosecuted and every president gets thrown in jail when they're done with office.' ... Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said Sunday on CBS News's 'Face the Nation' that 'there's no reason to not stand by anybody in this moment,' drawing a distinction between individuals who have been accused of crimes and pleaded guilty and others, presumably Trump."

**-- But Rubio added that, if Trump chooses to pardon Manafort, it could "trigger a debate" about overhauling pardon powers.** "I don't believe that any pardons should be used with relation to these particular cases, frankly," Rubio said on [ABC News](#). "Not only does it not pass the smell test, I just think it undermines the reason why we have presidential pardons in the first place, and I think, in fact, that if something like that were to happen, it could trigger a debate about whether the pardon powers should be amended given these circumstances, so I hope that they don't do that. It would be a terrible mistake if they did."

**-- And Rand voiced concerns about Trump's attorney general nominee, William Barr.** [Sonmez reports](#): "'I'm concerned that he's been a big supporter of the Patriot Act, which lowered the standard for spying on Americans. And he even went so far as to say, you know, the Patriot Act was pretty good, but we should go much further.' ... Paul said that while he hasn't made a decision on Barr, 'I

can tell you, the first things that I've learned about him being for more surveillance of Americans is very, very troubling.”



Former FBI director James Comey goes through security as he arrives to testify before the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees on Capitol Hill. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Former FBI director Jim Comey dodged many questions from House lawmakers about the bureau's 2016 investigations, often citing overlap with**

**Mueller's probe.** [Karoun Demirjian and Matt Zapotosky report](#): “Republicans from the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform committees peppered Comey with questions about the FBI’s investigation into former secretary of state Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server, including whether Comey would have dismissed former officials Peter Strzok and Lisa Page from the probe had he known they were exchanging texts disparaging [Trump]. Comey said he probably would have. However, the former director repeatedly declined to answer questions seeking detailed answers about elements of the FBI’s Russia investigation, which Comey either could not recall — such as who prepared the document launching the bureau’s counterintelligence investigation of individuals affiliated with Trump — or thought came too close to [Mueller’s investigation].”

**-- An FBI official who accompanied Comey for his testimony at one point confirmed Mueller is investigating Trump’s possible obstruction of justice.** [The Atlantic’s Andrew Kragie reports](#): “The moment came as Representative Trey Gowdy, the retiring South Carolina Republican who grew famous for leading a Benghazi investigation, was asking Comey whether he considered a Justice Department memo sufficient grounds for Trump to fire him. The FBI official, Cecilia Bessee, interrupted Gowdy: ‘Mr. Chairman, to the extent that question goes—again, goes to the special counsel’s investigation into obstruction, the witness will not be able

to answer.’”

**-- Speaking to an audience in New York last night, Comey implored American voters to end Trump’s presidency by electing a Democrat in 2020. [CNN’s Gregory Krieg reports](#): “All of us should use every breath we have to make sure the lies stop on January 20, 2021,’ Comey told an audience at the 92nd Street Y on New York City’s Upper East Side. He all but begged Democrats to set aside their ideological differences and nominate the person best suited to defeating Trump in an election. ‘I understand the Democrats have important debates now over who their candidate should be,’ Comey told MSNBC’s Nicolle Wallace, ‘but they have to win. They have to win.’ ... Asked if Trump might be an unindicted co-conspirator in some of the crimes recently described by [Mueller], Comey said he didn’t know, ‘but if he’s not there, he’s certainly close.’”**

**-- Robby Mook, who managed Hillary Clinton’s campaign, has an I-told-you-so [op-ed for Monday’s Post](#) that outlines just how much was publicly known about Trump’s ties to Russia before the election: “Obviously, much more evidence about Russia’s interference has come out since 2016. But I’m not sure we’ve learned the bigger lesson: Why did it take two years and dozens of indictments for so many to believe that Russia was not only behind the DNC hack but may also have been in cahoots with the Trump campaign,**

when there was so much evidence at the time? It's as if something needs to be secret or hidden to truly matter. If it's sealed in a courtroom, it must be a bombshell, but if it's out in the open, it's just not as serious. **Trump will not be the last of his kind. The next time so much evidence about a candidate is sitting out in plain view, let's hope it gets a good look before Americans cast their votes."**



**MIDTERMS FALLOUT:**

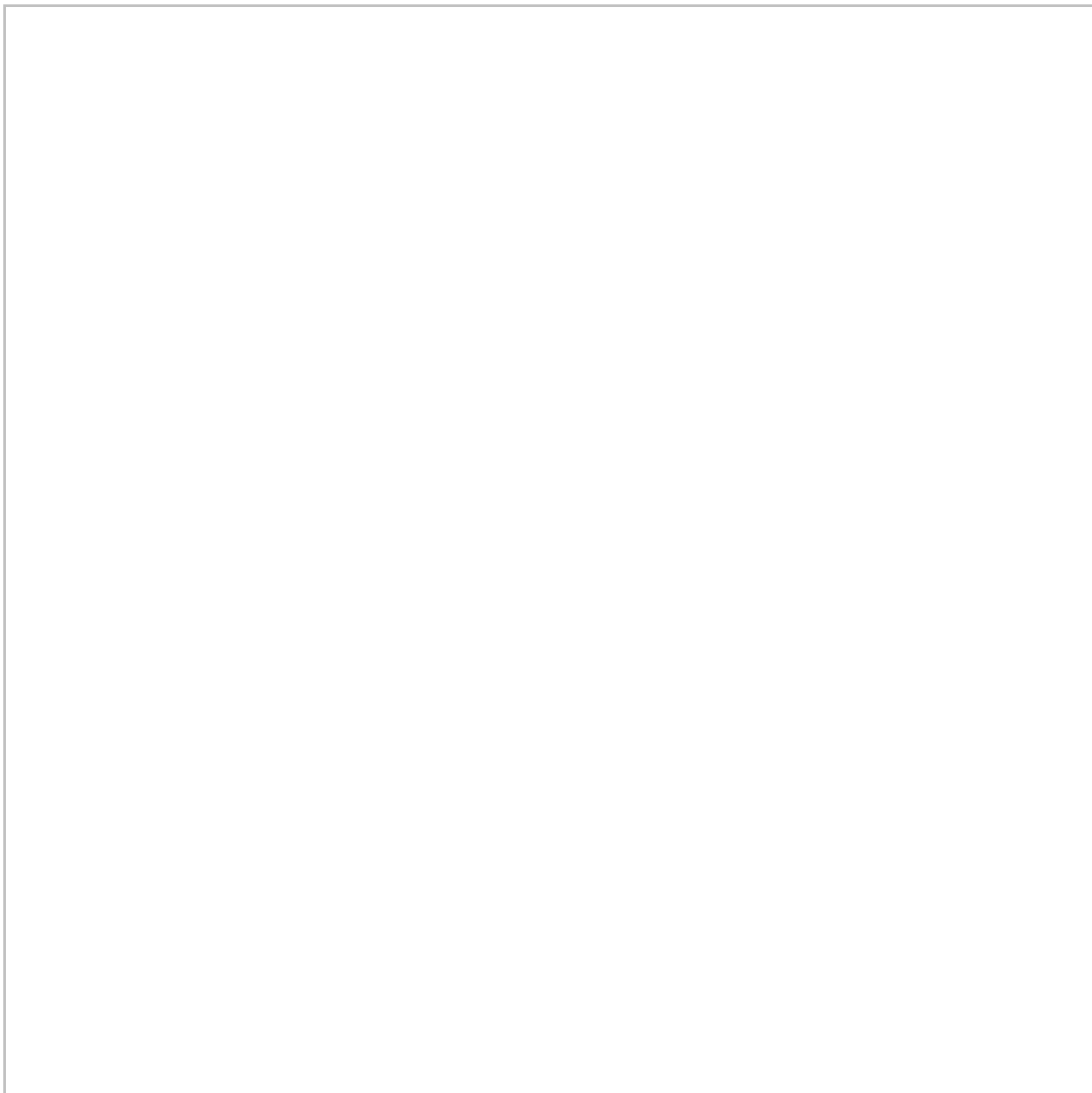


**-- Wisconsin's Democratic governor-elect suggested he may pursue legal challenges against Republicans' lame-duck legislation. [Felicia Sonmez reports](#):** “‘I’m not making any promises one way or the other, but we’re looking at all issues, all options on the table,’ [Gov.-elect Tony Evers] said ... ‘I need to stand up for the people of Wisconsin. There’s 2.6 million people that voted in this last election, and they expect me to do that. So we’re going to pursue this.’ Evers said that he has urged Gov. Scott Walker (R) to veto the bills but that Walker was ‘noncommittal.’ Walker has previously signaled support for the measures.”

**-- The House Democratic caucus will be divided between progressives trying to push their party to the left and moderates looking for common ground with Republicans, a combination that could complicate their efforts to pass legislation. [Bloomberg News's Sahil Kapur reports](#):** “How Speaker-in-waiting Nancy Pelosi manages the tension, which is already on display, will frame the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination race, as the House will serve as the party’s main power center to advance its agenda and draw contrasts with [Trump]. Messy battles between the party’s factions risk undercutting Democrats hopes of rallying to defeat Trump in the next election, potentially costing them the chance to define the political debate and highlight favorable issues.”

**-- Now that all the midterm elections have officially concluded, Dave Weigel writes that Republicans have a clear path to regaining the House majority in 2020.**

[From Weigel](#): “[The number of] House Democrats in Trump districts: 30, up from 13 before the election, though it will tick up to 31 if a special election is called in North Carolina's 9th District and Republicans don't win. ... You don't have to squint to see a path back to a Republican majority in 2020; winning a little more than half of these seats would do that. But the flipped districts fall into two distinct categories. In 10 districts, Trump ran weaker than Mitt Romney had in 2012, while in the other 20, he ran stronger.”



Beto O'Rourke greets supporters following a rally in Austin. (Nick Wagner/Austin American-Statesman/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Early voting in California and Texas could fundamentally alter the Democratic primaries in 2020.** [NBC News's Alex Seitz-Wald reports](#): "A little over a year from now, millions of Californians will be mailed their ballots on the same day that Iowans head to their famous first-in-the-nation presidential caucuses. They could start

mailing them back before New Hampshire holds its first-in-the-nation primary in 2020. Meanwhile, Texans will likely have a chance to vote early, too — even before Nevada and South Carolina, which typically round out the earliest portion of the primary calendar. The explosion of early voting and reshuffling of the primary calendar in 2020 could transform the Democratic presidential nominating contest, potentially diminishing the power of the traditional, tiny and homogeneous early states in favor of much larger and more diverse battlegrounds. That would be a boon to the best-known candidates with war chests sizable enough to compete in big states early. And it would empower black and Hispanic voters in large, multiracial states like California, which was a virtual afterthought at the back of the primary calendar in 2016.”

**-- Nebraska Democrats decided to return to a primary system for 2020 rather than hold another caucus. [The Omaha World-Herald's Roseann Moring and Micah Mertes report](#):** “The state’s Democrats had been choosing their presidential nominee by caucus since 2008 in a system similar to Iowa’s. ... But Nebraska Democratic Party’s State Central Committee voted at its meeting in Ord on Saturday to discontinue the system and go back to regular primary voting. The change was overwhelmingly approved on a voice vote following about 90 minutes of debate. Critics of the caucuses cited the several-hour investment that voters have to make and said it could decrease turnout in the May primary, when

nominees for other offices are chosen.”

**-- Potential Democratic candidates are worried about how Beto O’Rourke could shake up the 2020 race if he chooses to run. [The New York Times’s Matt Flegenheimer and Jonathan Martin report](#):** “[O’Rourke] has emerged as the wild card of the presidential campaign-in-waiting for a Democratic Party that lacks a clear 2020 front-runner. ... Advisers to other prospective Democratic candidates for 2020 acknowledge that Mr. O’Rourke is worthy of their concern. His record-setting success with small donors would test the grass-roots strength of progressives like Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. His sometimes saccharine call to summon the nation’s better angels would compete with the likely pitch of Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey. And his appeal to some former Obama advisers — and, potentially, his electoral coalition of young people, women and often infrequent voters — could complicate a possible run for former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who would aim to win back many of his former boss’s constituencies.”

**-- Elizabeth Warren’s aides have started looking for a campaign headquarters in the Boston area. [Politico’s Natasha Korecki reports](#):** “Warren has the core of her 2020 team in place if she runs for president. ... All that’s left is for her to give the green light. When and if she does, she’ll be rolling out arguably the most advanced

and sweeping infrastructure in the Democratic field, a plug-and-play campaign that could give her a massive head start on nearly every contender in the burgeoning primary roster, with only Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) coming close.”

**-- Technology is transforming how potential 2020 candidates present themselves to voters. [Michael](#)**

[Scherer reports](#): “The 2020 campaign ... will take place in a media landscape that has shifted in just the past two years and been radically transformed since the 2008 primary, which began before the release of the first iPhone. Iowa hay bale speeches and cable news primary debates will still play a role. But Democratic strategists say the quest to capture the attention of Democrats online, through social streams and viral sharing that exude a sense of immediacy and authenticity, could dominate the early months in a crowded field, as energized voters subscribe and swipe in search of a candidate match.”



People rally at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington to protest the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

## THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- A transcript of Jamal Khashoggi's killing revealed the Post contributing columnist's final words: "I can't breathe." [CNN's Nic Robertson reports](#): "[One] source, who has read a translated transcript of an audio recording of Khashoggi's painful last moments, said it was clear that the killing on October 2 was no botched rendition

attempt, but the execution of a premeditated plan to murder the journalist. During the course of the gruesome scene, the source describes Khashoggi struggling against a group of people determined to kill him. 'I can't breathe,' Khashoggi says. 'I can't breathe.' 'I can't breathe.' The transcript notes the sounds of Khashoggi's body being dismembered by a saw, as the alleged perpetrators are advised to listen to music to block out the sound. And, according to the source, the transcript suggests that a series of phone calls are made, briefing them on progress."

**-- British Prime Minister Theresa May was criticized as a traitor days before a Parliament vote on her Brexit deal. [William Booth reports](#):** "[A] march was called by the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), a once-ascendant movement now in decline, dominated by 'Euroskeptics' and right-wing populists. They were at the forefront of the winning Brexit campaign two years ago ... Now the Ukipers and their allies at the rally say they are being double-crossed by 'the establishment,' aided by a 'seditious BBC,' and a deep state of pro-Europe civil servants and global capitalists led by May. In the crowd, one man held aloft a gallows with a hangman's noose. Others shouted that May should be 'taken to the Tower,' the medieval palace-prison where Henry VIII had his wives killed."

**-- The Brexit deal is widely expected to be defeated,**



**which will probably set off a flurry of last-minute negotiations to avoid some of the most dire consequences of the country's withdrawal from the European Union.** [Michael Birnbaum reports](#): “Europeans have gone slackjawed at London’s political chaos, with normally demure diplomats comparing the process there to a slow-motion car wreck. They say they can offer little other than cosmetic tweaks that might help May save face with her own Conservative Party. And they have begun to accelerate their emergency planning to prepare safety nets that could avoid some of the humanitarian and economic chaos that might happen if Britain crashes out of the European Union on its deadline of March 29, with no other plan in place.”

**-- France has opened an investigation into possible Russian involvement with the country’s Yellow Vest protests.** [Bloomberg News’s Carol Matlack and Robert Williams report](#): “According to the Alliance for Securing Democracy, about 600 Twitter accounts known to promote Kremlin views have begun focusing on France, boosting their use of the hashtag #giletsjaunes, the French name for the Yellow Vest movement. French security services are looking at the situation, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Sunday in a radio interview with RTL.”

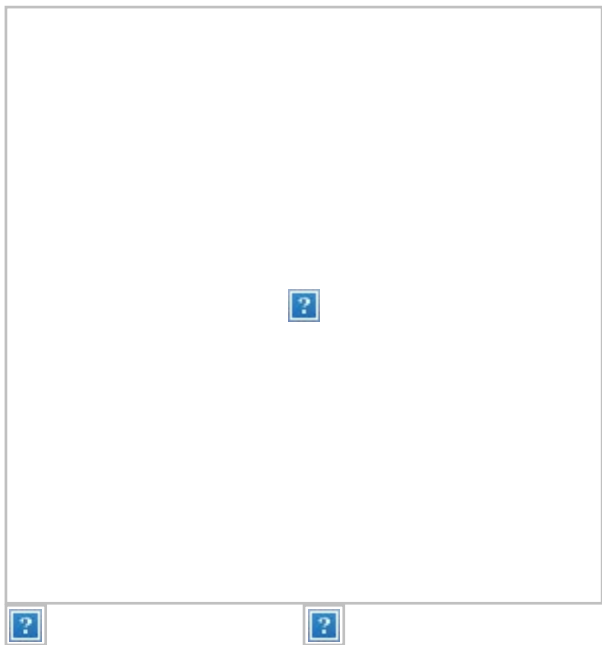
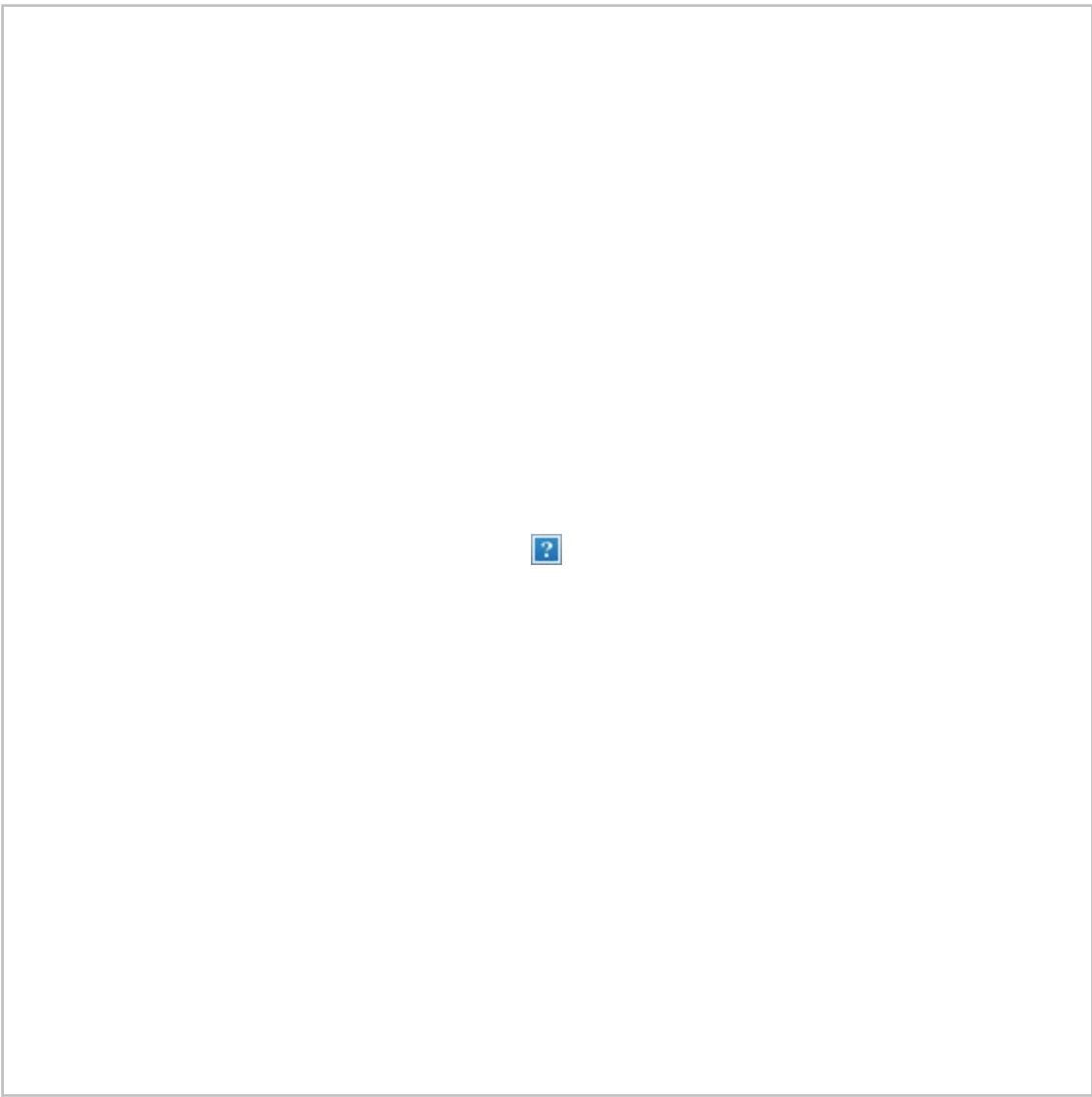
**SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

Trump dismissed a possible campaign-finance violation as a “simple private transaction.”

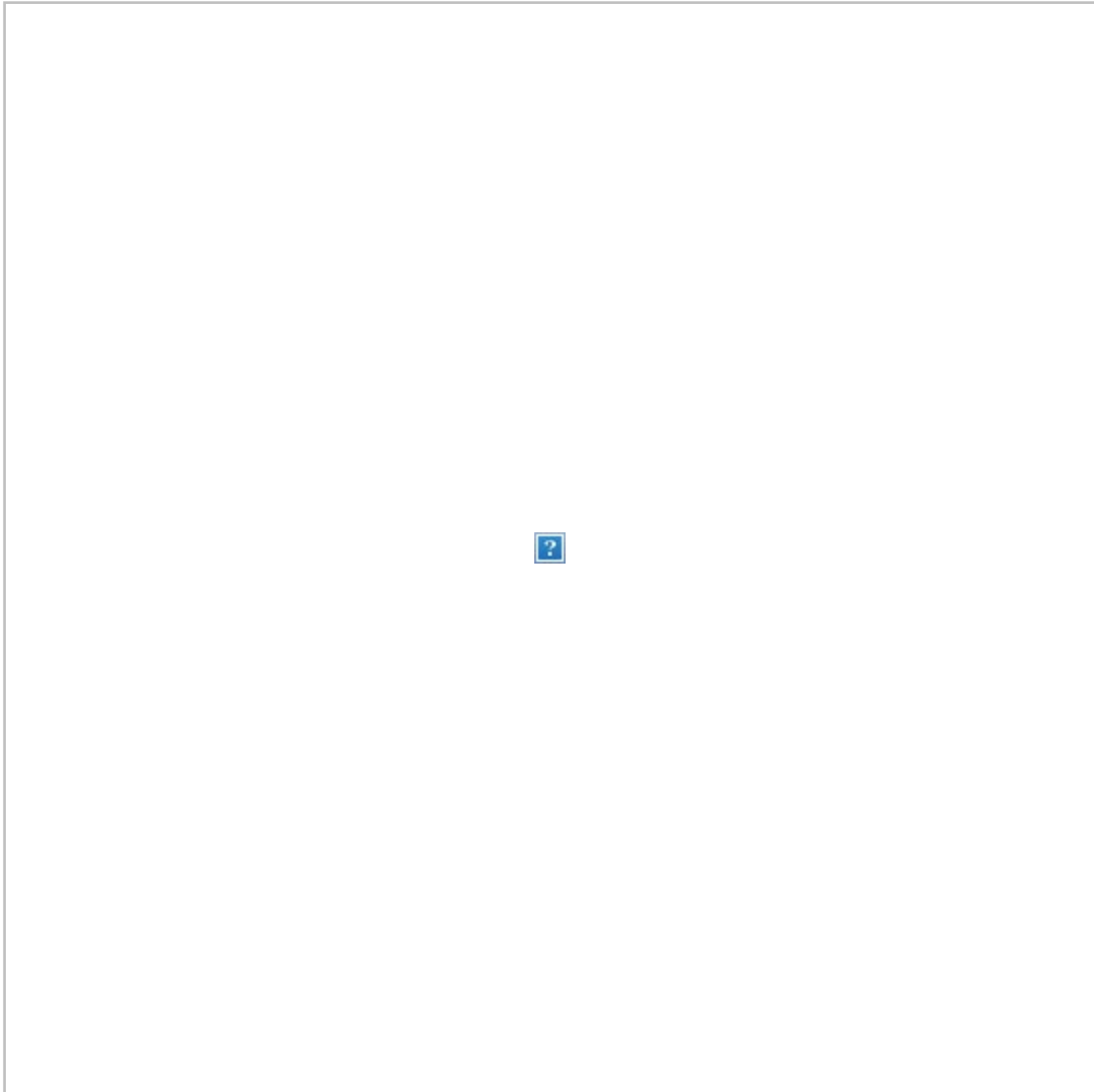




And he downplayed the chief of staff drama:



D.C. Twitter was dominated by buzz about Kelly, Ayers and the chief of staff search. From a CNN reporter:



Jeb Bush's former communications director cast doubt on the official storyline surrounding Ayers not getting the job:



Ayers confirmed he'll leave the White House at the end of the month:



From a Los Angeles Times editor:



A former spokesman for Hillary Clinton mocked Trump's search for a chief of staff:





A Democratic congresswoman called on Kelly to apologize:



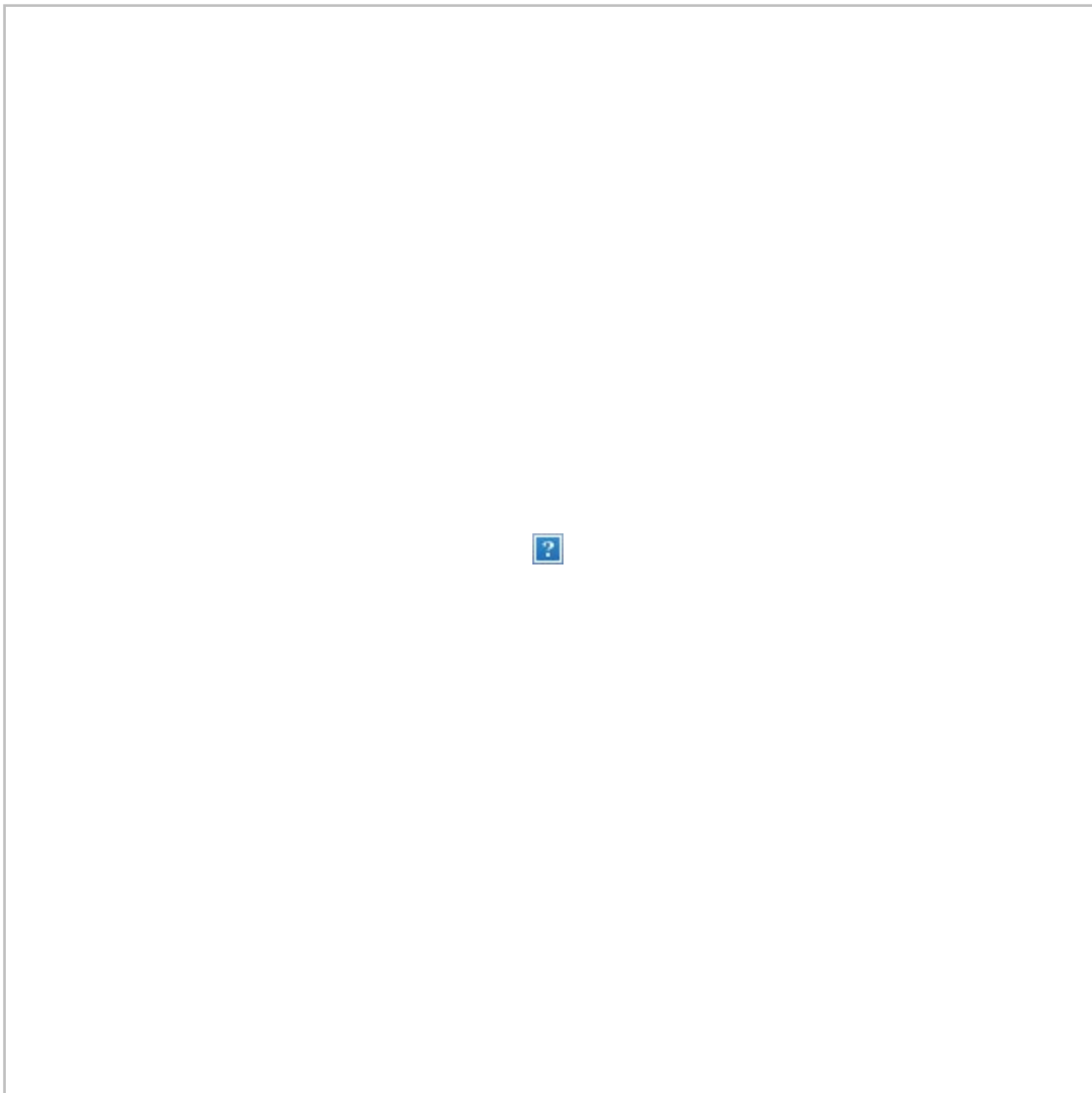
An MSNBC producer listed the many departures so far from the Trump administration:



Trump once again blamed the "Fake News Media" for negative coverage of his administration:



A former spokesman for Obama's Justice Department reflected on reports that prosecutors are weighing charging Trump for campaign-finance violations if he loses reelection:



A Bloomberg News reporter noted GOP lawmakers who have previously voted for impeachment:



A former Trump campaign adviser promoted a conspiracy theory about how federal agents obtained a FISA warrant on him:



A former FBI agent responded with context on the requirements for a FISA warrant:



Papadopoulos replied:

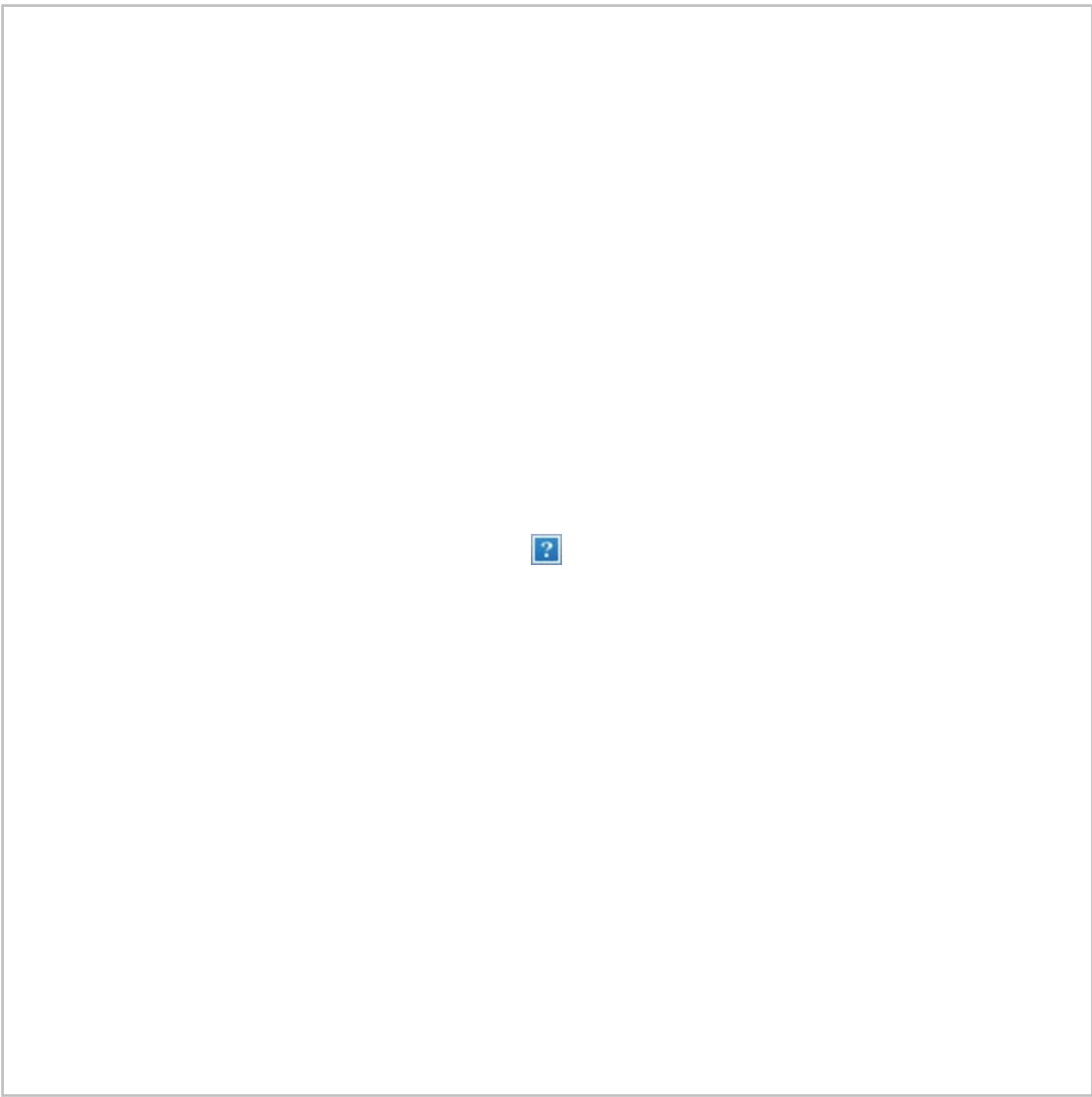


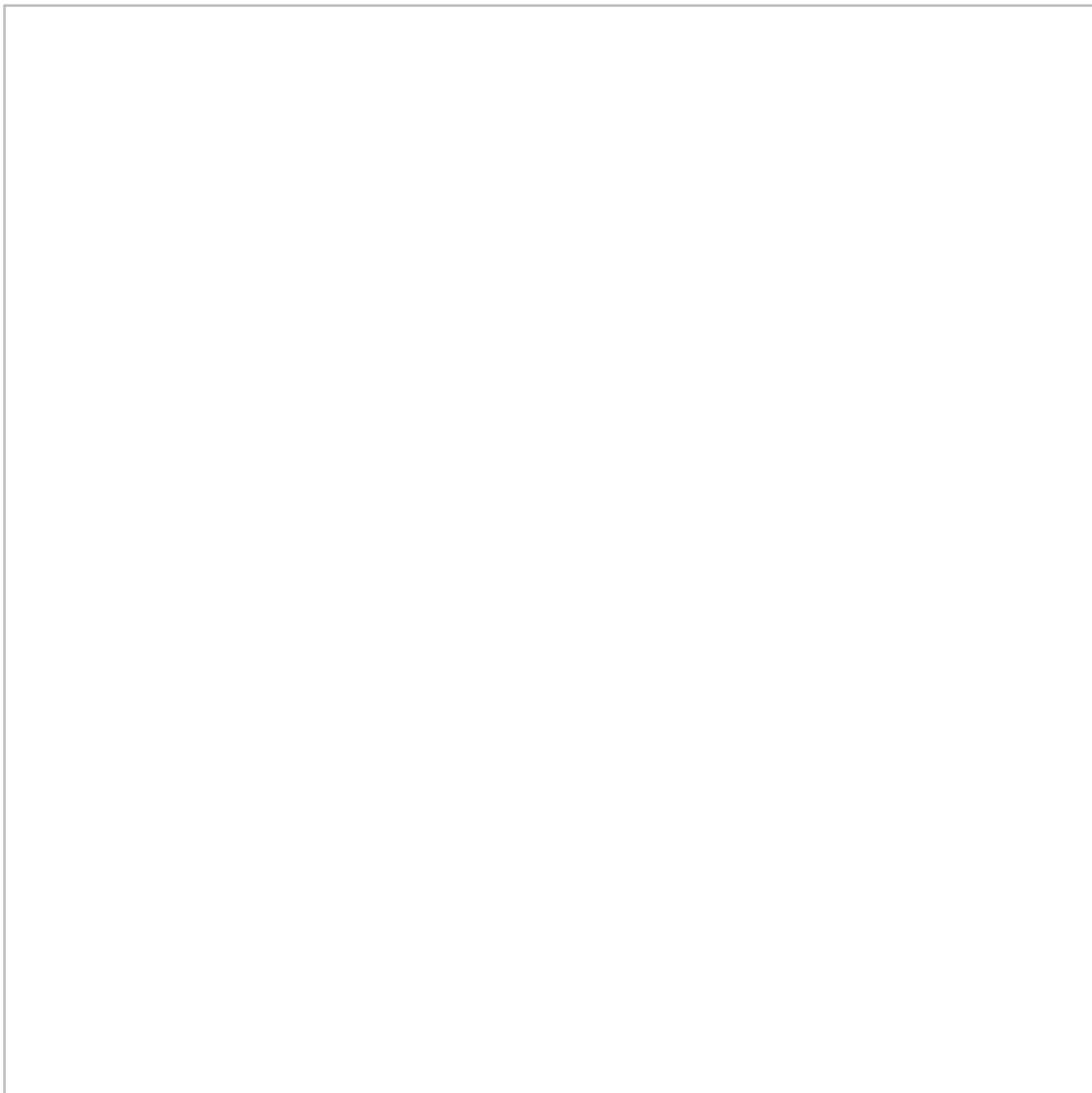


A Democratic congresswoman-elect reacted to a Weekly Standard reporter's criticism:



But the reporter then apologized, allowing for a rare moment of Twitter forgiveness:

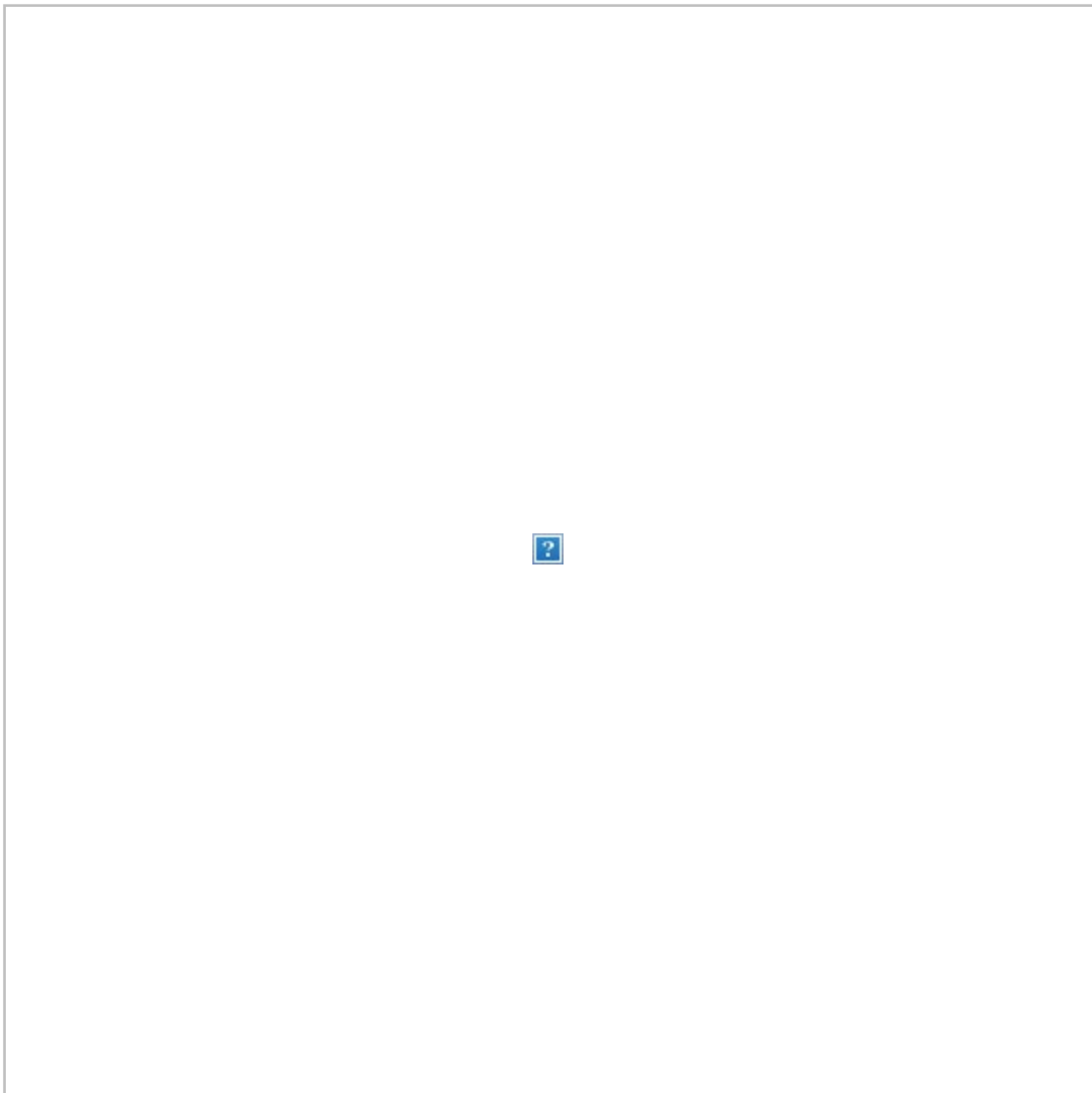




Michelle Obama retweeted a story about a young girl dressing up like the former first lady for her school's Cultural Heroes Day:



An NPR host commented on his employer's reliance on temps:



And a former Obama administration official highlighted an important panel on MSNBC:



## GOOD READS:

-- [“Meet Melania Trump’s enforcer. It’s not her husband,”](#) by Sarah Ellison: “Staffers in [Trump’s] White House are measured by longevity. There’s the November 9th Club, the nickname for those who joined after Trump won the election. There are those who joined the campaign earlier, but only after he secured the nomination. And there are a few who came on board when his campaign was largely viewed as a joke by the

GOP establishment — and everyone else. Few in Trump's White House have a history with him that dates as far back as Stephanie Grisham. For nearly two years, she served as communications director for first lady Melania Trump. A few weeks ago, she received a promotion to deputy chief of staff for communications and has become one of the more powerful figures in the ever-evolving Trump White House. Back in the summer of 2015, she was a lowly press wrangler on Trump's campaign."

-- New York Times, "[What Straight-A Students Get Wrong](#)," by Adam Grant: "The evidence is clear: Academic excellence is not a strong predictor of career excellence. Across industries, research shows that the correlation between grades and job performance is modest in the first year after college and trivial within a handful of years. ... Academic grades rarely assess qualities like creativity, leadership and teamwork skills, or social, emotional and political intelligence. Yes, straight-A students master cramming information and regurgitating it on exams. But career success is rarely about finding the right solution to a problem — it's more about finding the right problem to solve."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**"Suffering pickaxes**

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Miami's 'big bad**



and dog poop, Trump's Hollywood star has become a symbolic spectacle," from Rob Kuznia: "Since Trump announced his campaign for the Oval Office in 2015, his Walk of Fame star has been a constant source of conflict and spectacle. The pink pentagram has been destroyed twice, obliterated by a pickax two weeks before the 2016 election and again this past July. It has been a regular target of lesser vandalism: stomping, spitting and dog-pooping. It has been scrawled with pejoratives and spray-painted with swastikas. On Sept.

she-wolf' finishes a 29-year run in Congress," from the Miami Herald: "As Miami's longest-tenured congresswoman [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen] finishes out her final weeks in office, there's still plenty of work to do. Her bill that would limit U.S. loans to the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega until he carries out democratic reforms passed the U.S. Senate, though it still needs final passage in the House of Representatives and [Trump's] signature. Another bill named in her honor would authorize defense and security

20, a few weeks after the shattered star was replaced, a street artist covered it with bars resembling a jail cell. This has become ground zero for the West Coast's grass-roots war over the Trump presidency, a sidewalk attraction for pro- and anti-Trumpers alike. ... Installed in 2007, Trump's star has been guarded by fake Russian soldiers, crowned by a golden toilet and enclosed by a mini-wall lined with mock barbed wire."

spending assistance for Israel, and it has an uncertain fate in the final weeks of this year's Congress. Though Ros-Lehtinen is leaving office, her anti-communist worldview, inspired by a childhood in Cuba, lives on through dozens of former staffers and associates who occupy positions of power in government, notably Sen. Marco Rubio, a former intern. The legacy of her outsized influence on foreign policy and Latin American affairs will continue long after she leaves elected office."

**DAYBOOK:**

**Trump** will have lunch with **Pence**. He has no other events on his public schedule.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:**

**“I think you are beyond the stage that led to the impeachment proceedings against President Clinton, whether or not you think that that was worthy of impeachment.” – Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) on Mueller’s latest court filings. ([ABC News](#))**

**NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- Washington will see a lot of sunshine Monday to partly make up for the cold weather. [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “Sunday’s southern storm gradually pulls away from the North Carolina coast and sunshine returns in its wake. Despite the sun, chilly breezes (around 10 mph) from the north hold high temperatures to the low 40s.”**

**-- The Redskins lost to the Giants 40-16, further hurting the team’s slim playoff chances. ([Les Carpenter](#))**

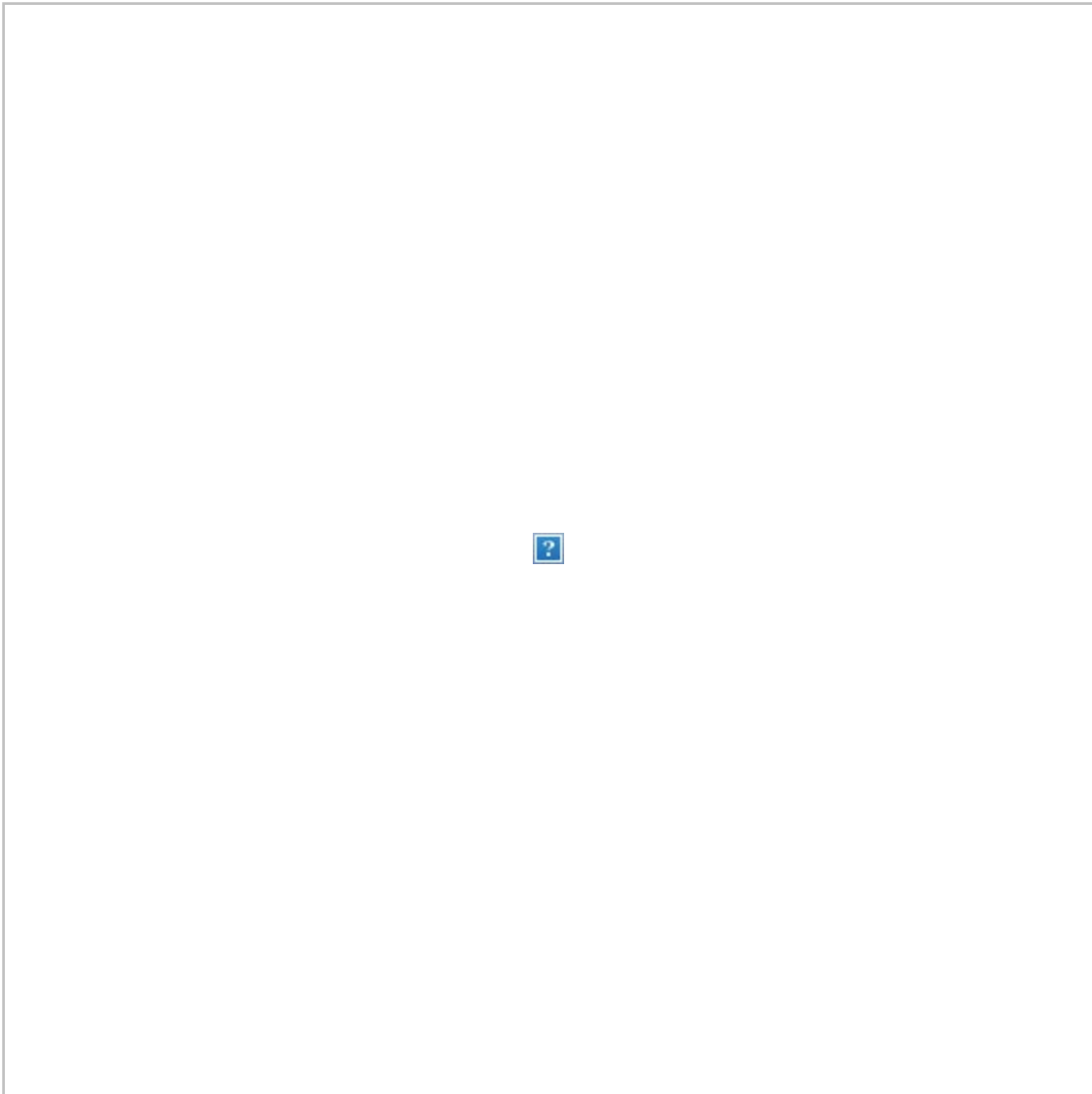
**-- Supporters of Initiative 77 are scrambling to collect**

**signatures in an attempt to overturn the D.C. Council's repeal of the minimum wage hike for tipped workers.** [Fenit Nirappil reports](#): "But a combination of procedural rules, legal challenges and bad timing left referendum supporters with a week to collect about 25,000 signatures required to put the issue back on the ballot. If they can collect enough signatures, the city would hold a special election early next year. Officials with the 'Save Our Vote' coalition have deployed more than 100 signature collectors outside supermarkets, government buildings, bars and even dog parks to pull off what seems like an insurmountable task. They are paying circulators \$3.75 a signature with the possibility of more, quadruple the standard rate. Workers have been working around the clock in a Northwest D.C. house since last Thursday, verifying that signatures belong to registered D.C. voters."

**-- George Washington University officials are pushing to end a project started in 1997 to honor the legacy of Jackie Robinson.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "The decision sparked an outcry from students, donors and teachers who testify to the impact of the project. The Jackie and Rachel Robinson Society, a student group associated with the project, launched a petition that has been signed by 499 people and that urges administrators to allow the project to continue."

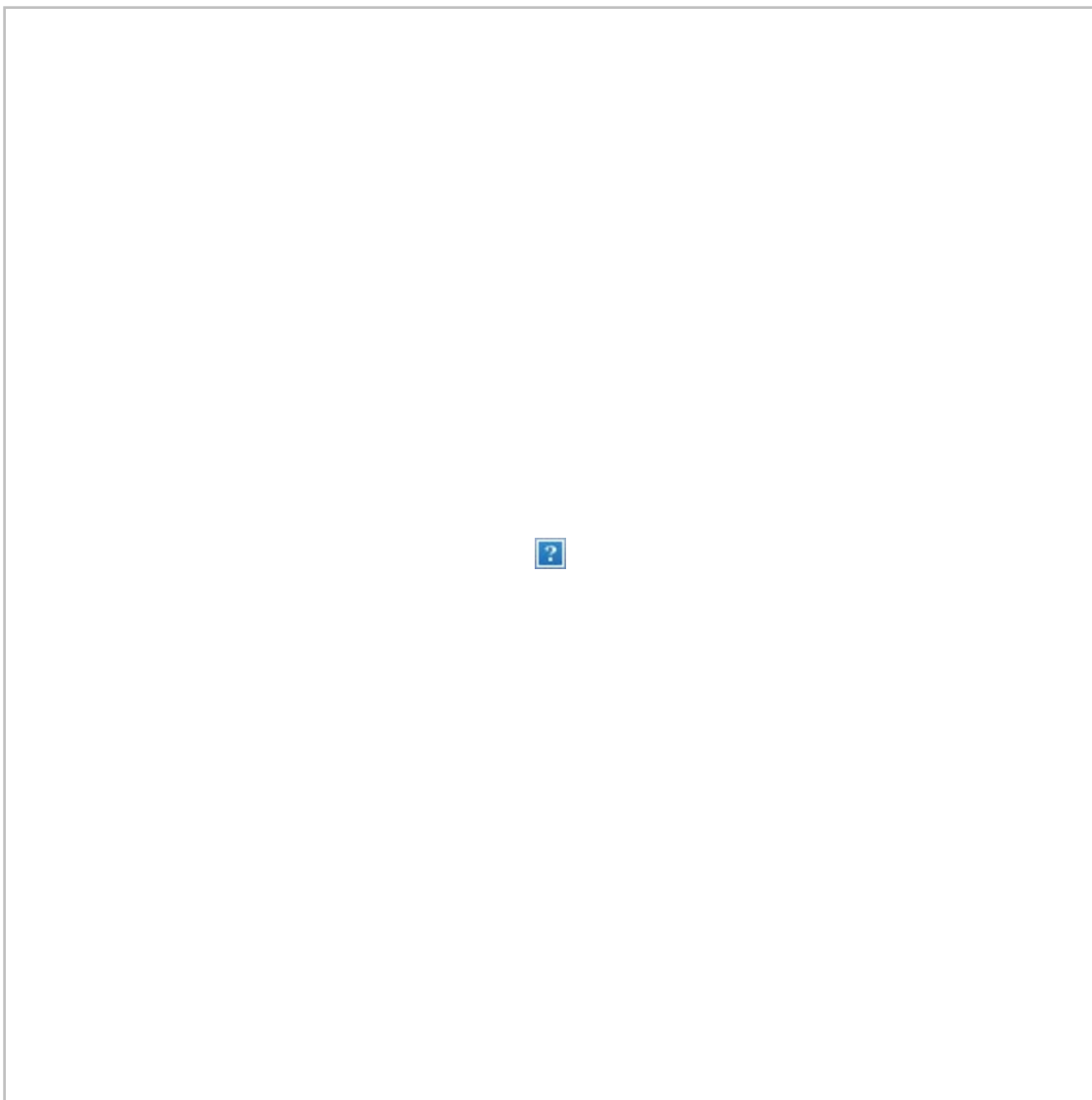
**VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

SNL imagined what would happen if Trump were black:



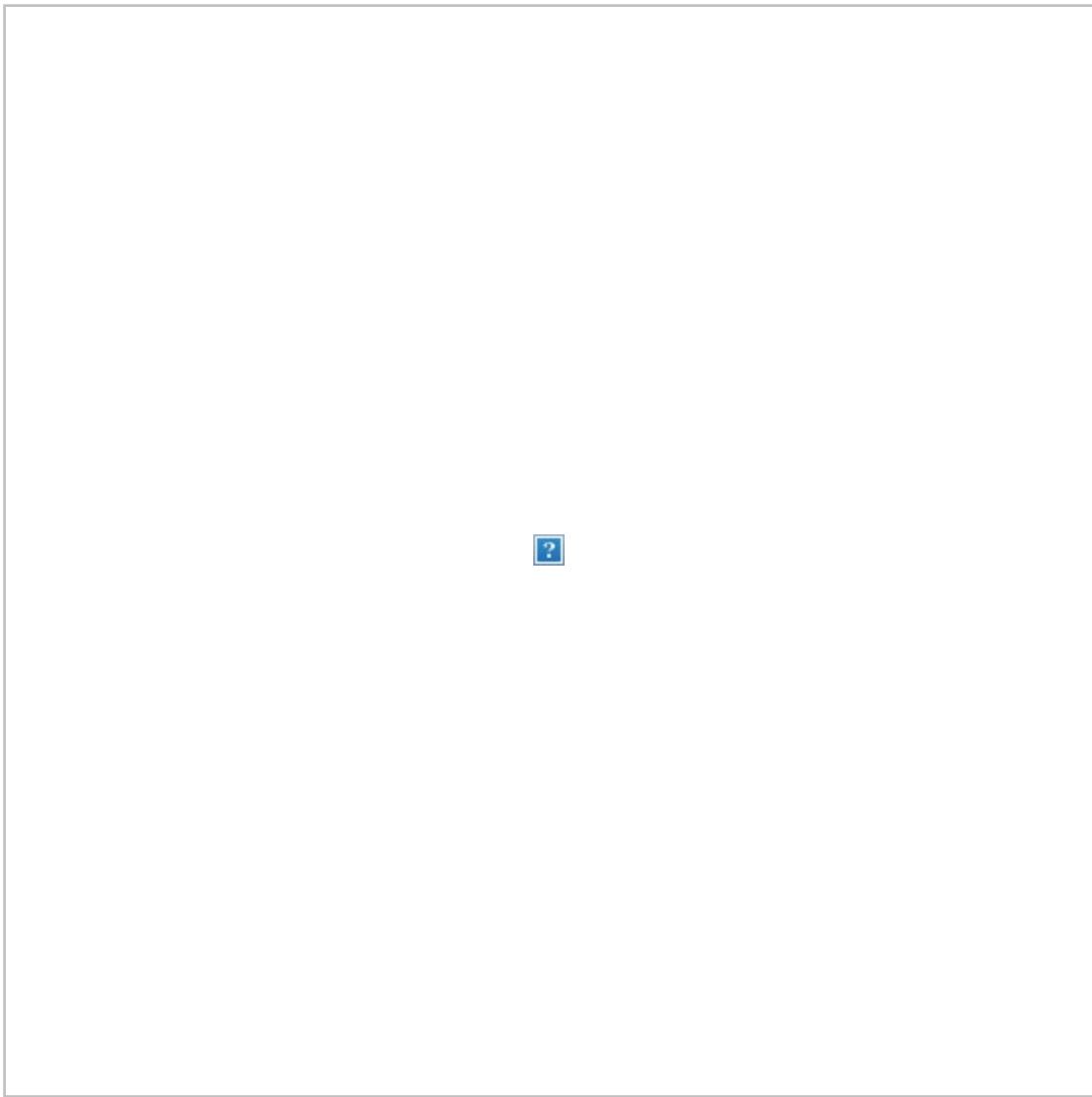
Them Trumps - SNL

SNL's Michael Che defended Kevin Hart after the comedian stepped down from hosting the Oscars over old tweets containing homophobic language:



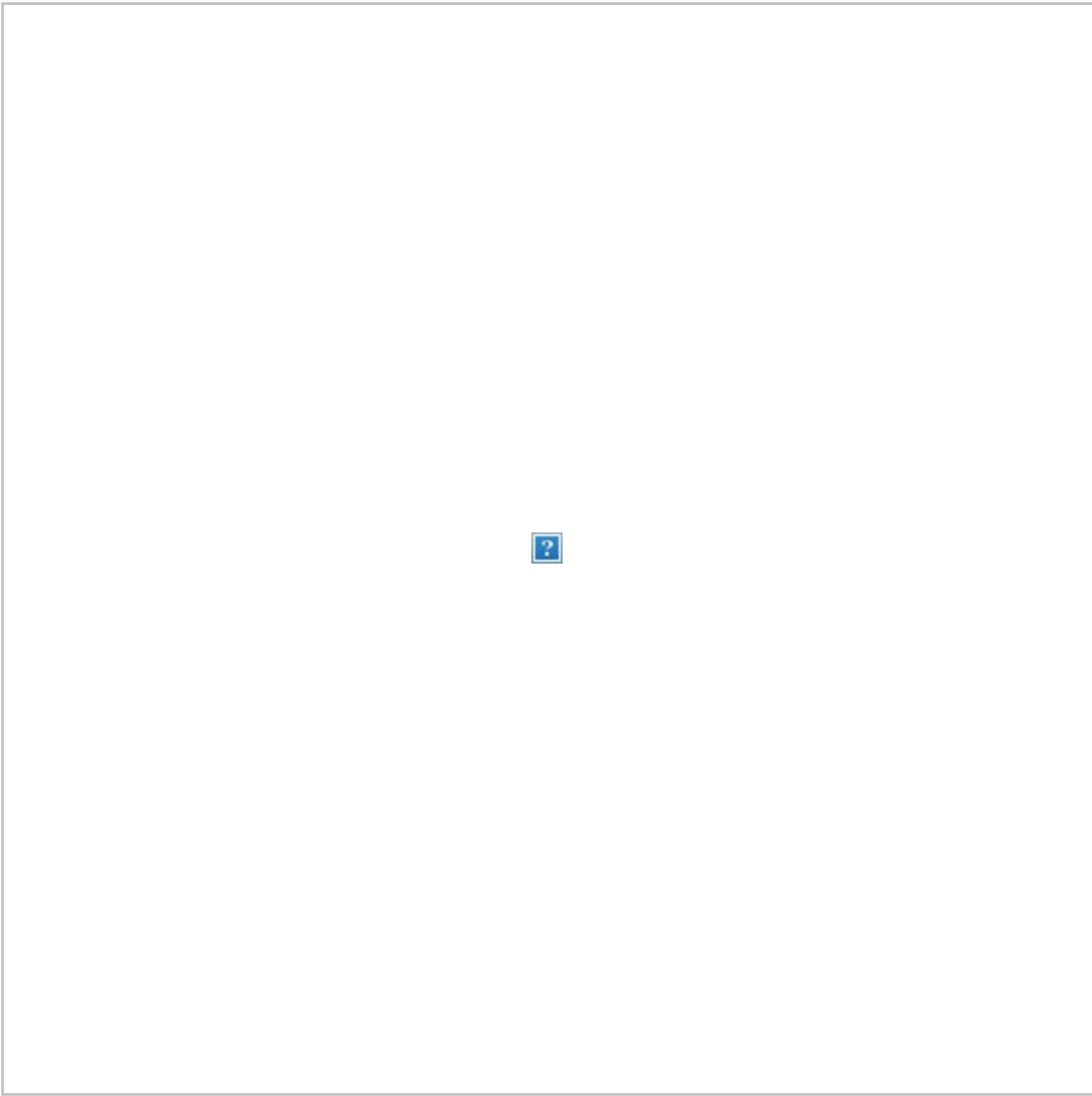
Weekend Update: SpaceX Launches Rocket with Cremated Remains - SNL

Trump tossed the coin at the Army-Navy game:



Trump tosses the coin for the Army-Navy game

Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez revealed her own Jewish ancestry on the last night of Hanukkah:

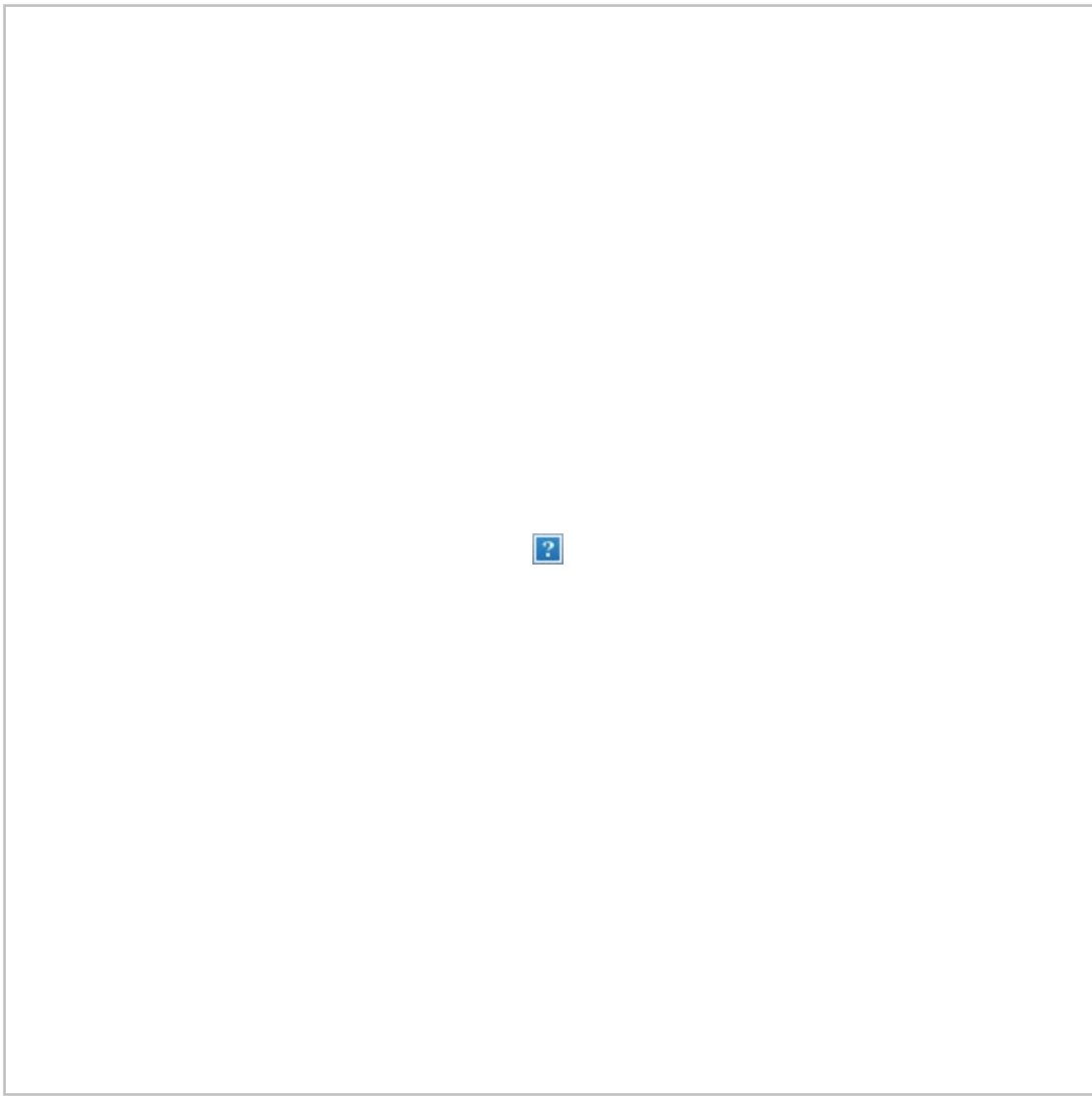


Two men were caught on camera robbing a Salvation Army collection kettle in Minnesota:

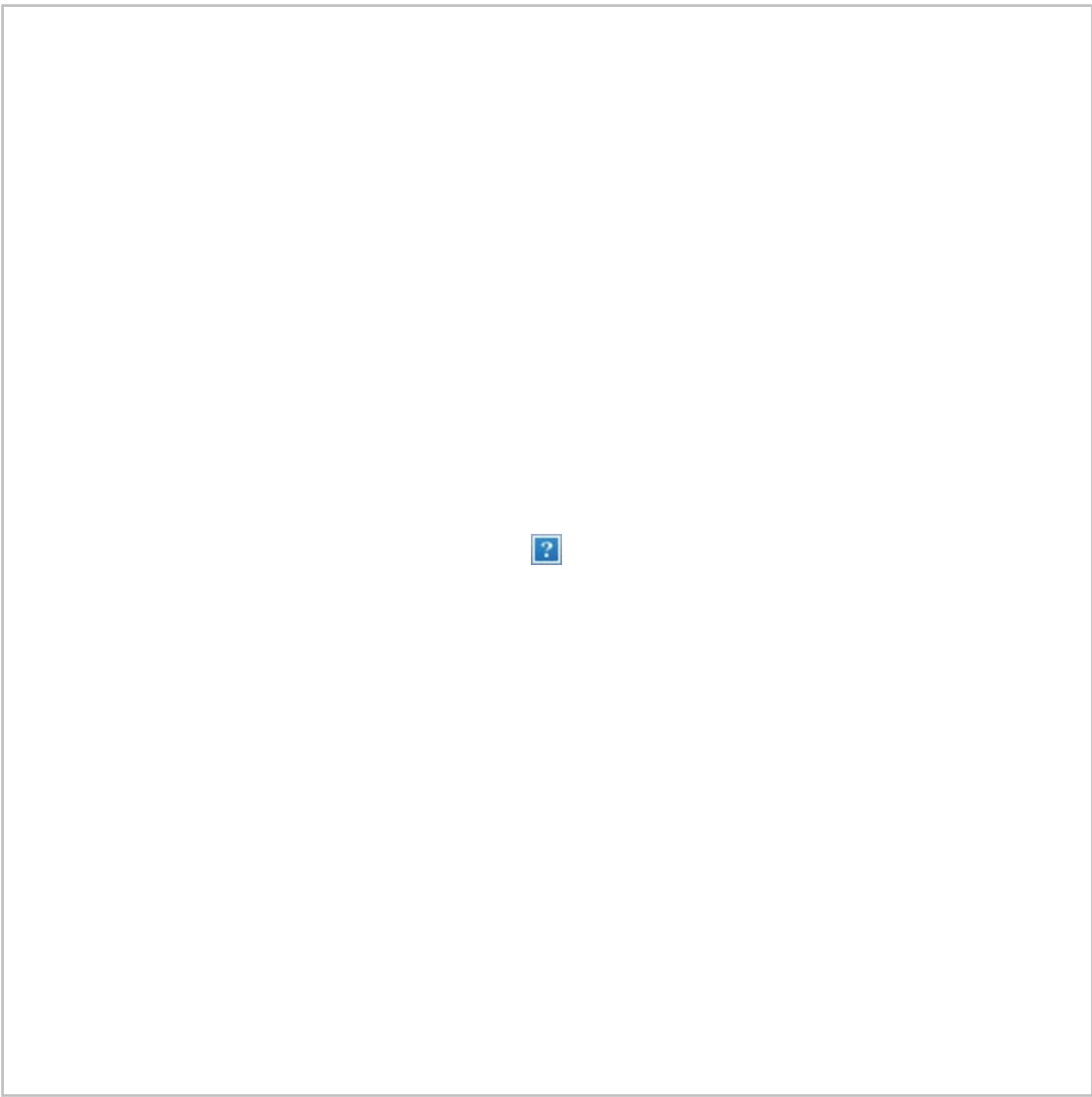




Miami beat New England with a wild final play:



And an NBA player's unfortunate interaction with a fan went viral:



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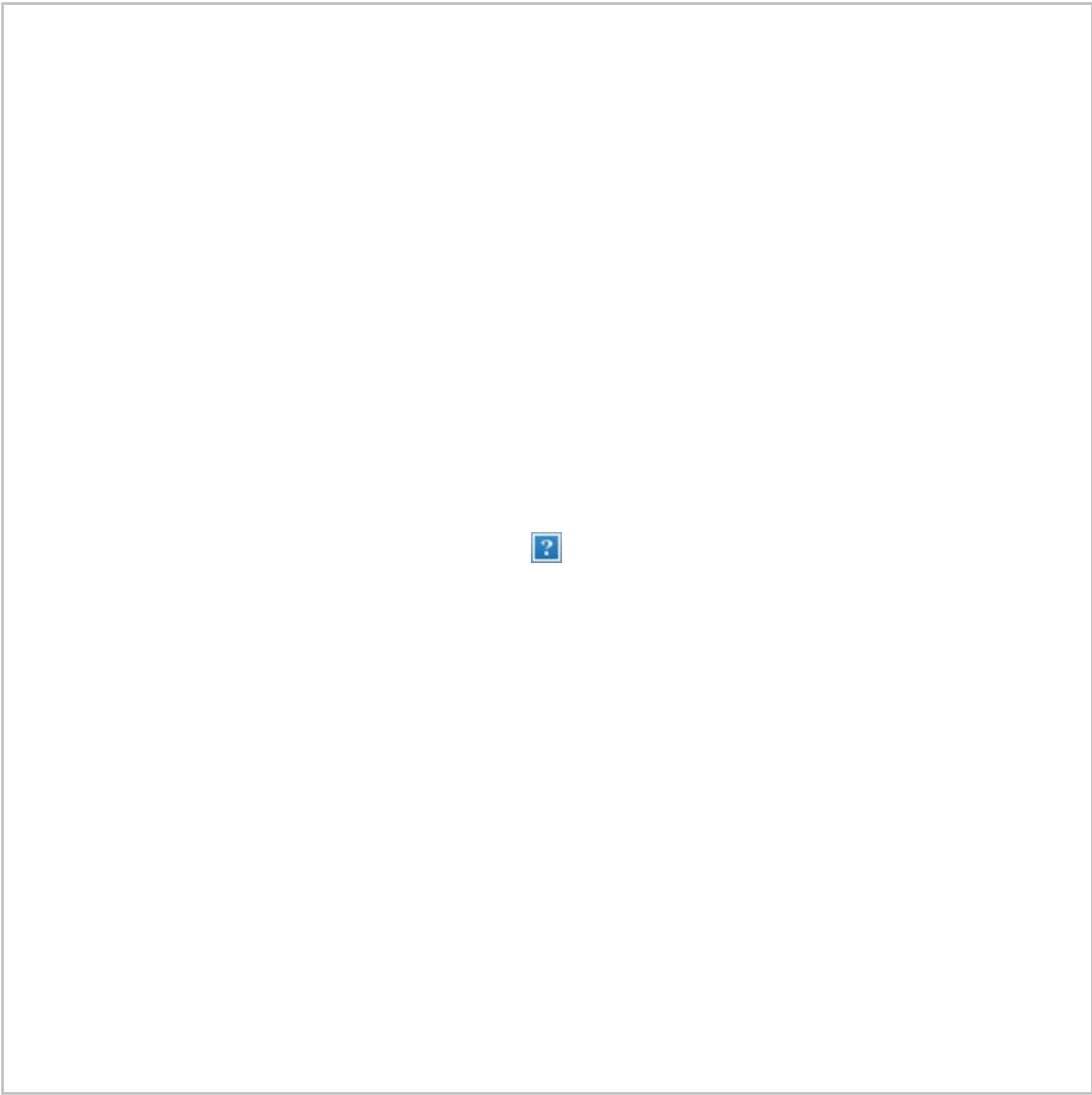
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# The Daily 202

Share:   Listen to The Big Idea

## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

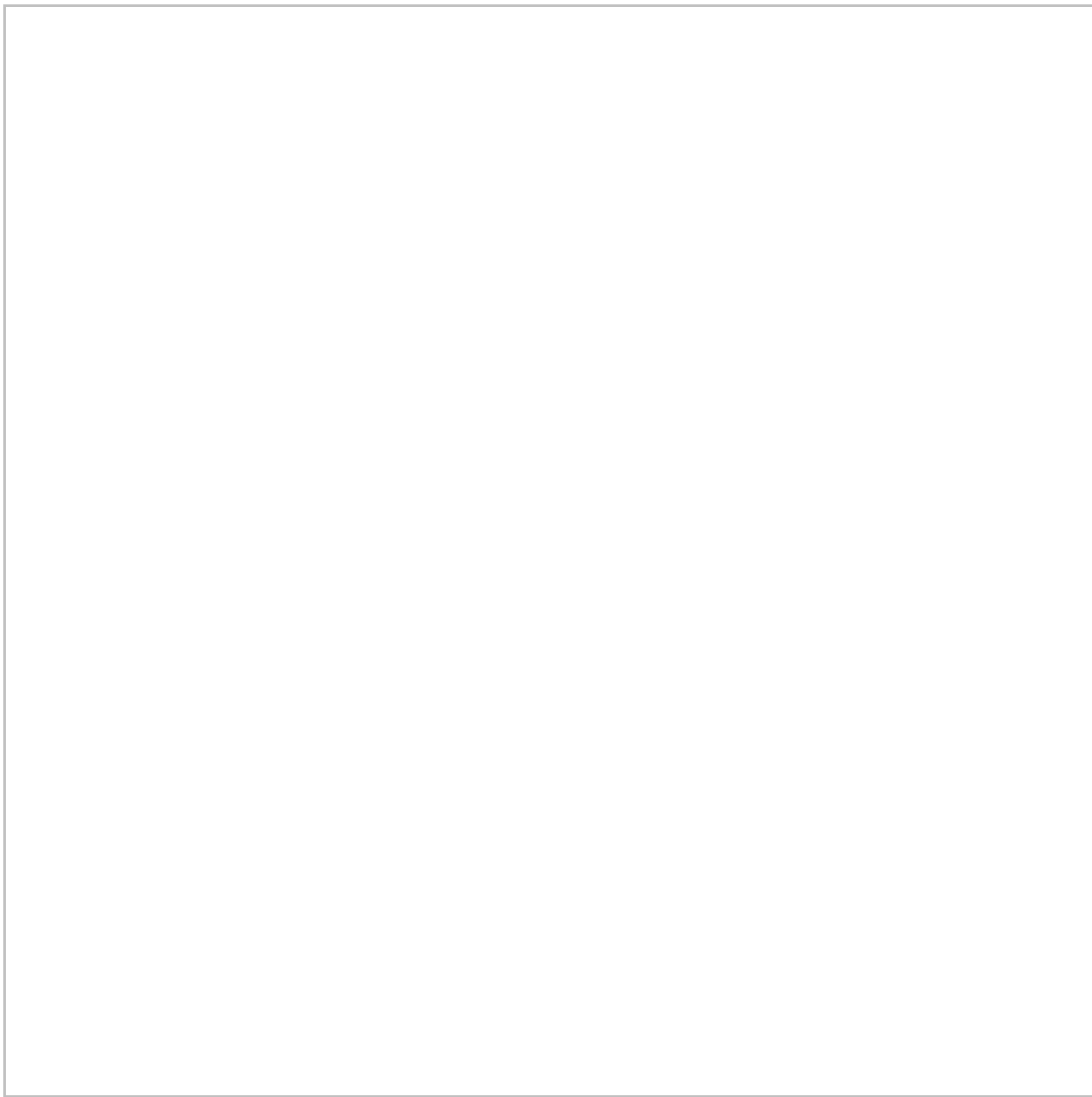
“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”



Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."



Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”



Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

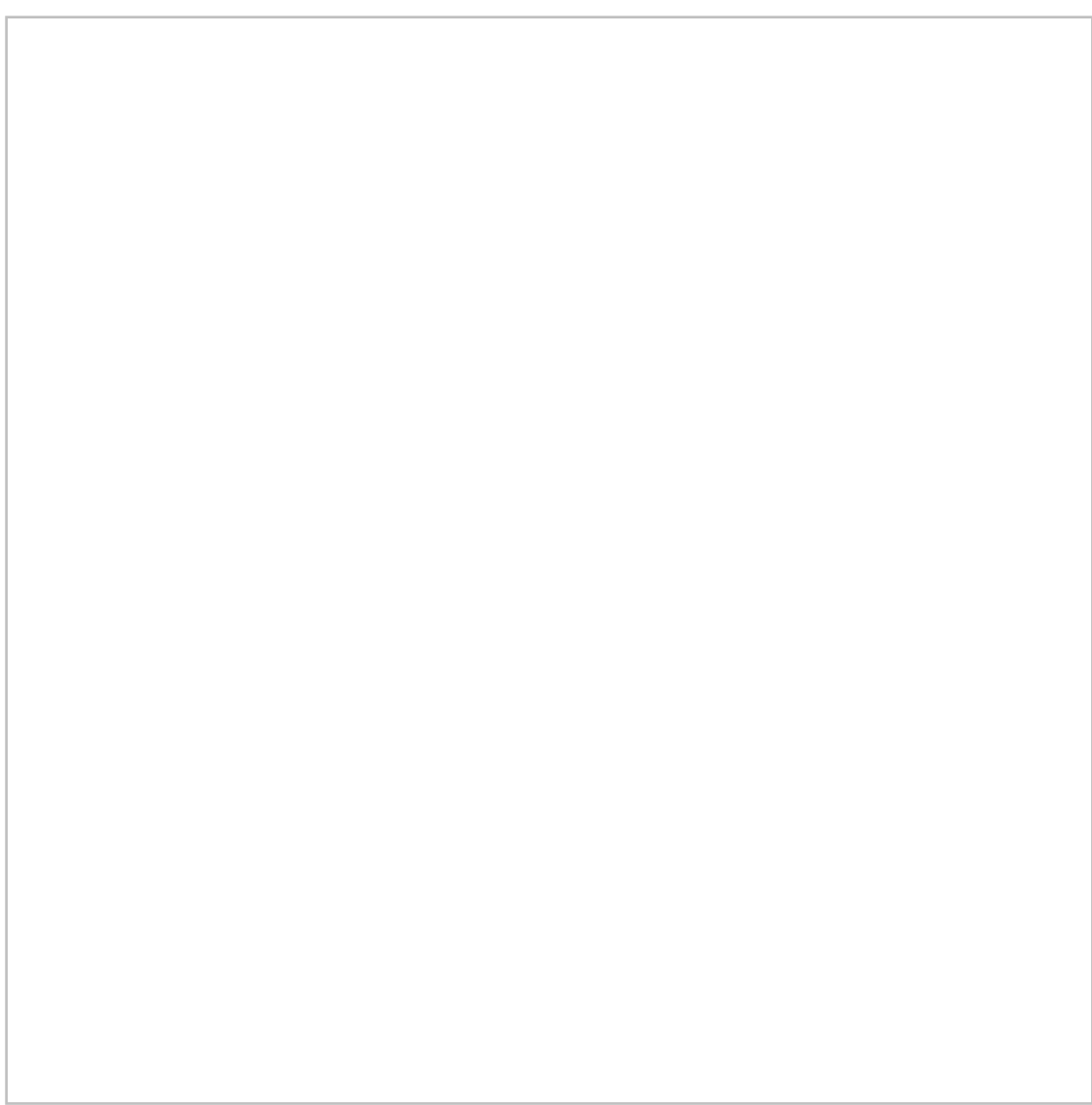
“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –



information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”



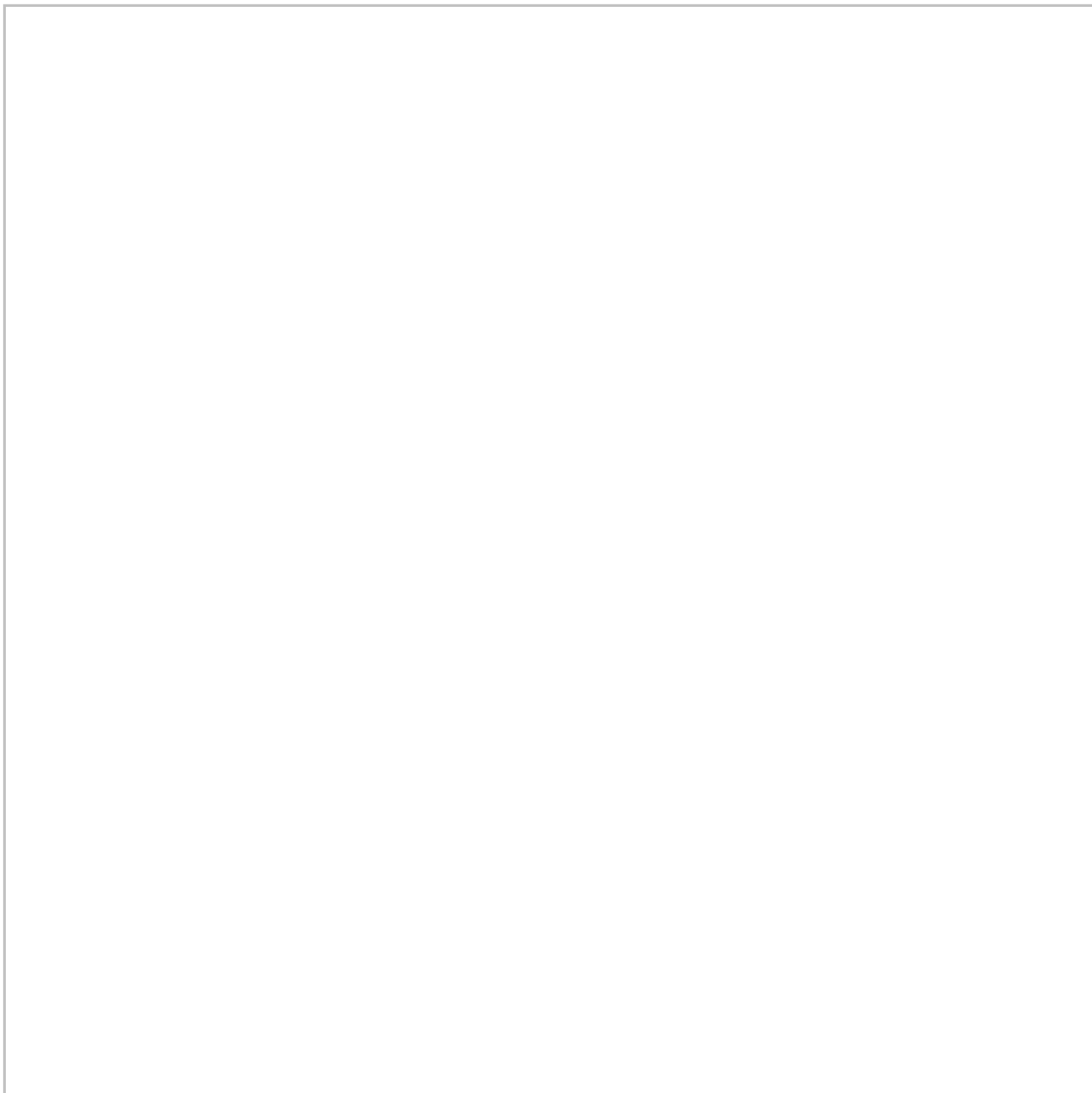
William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

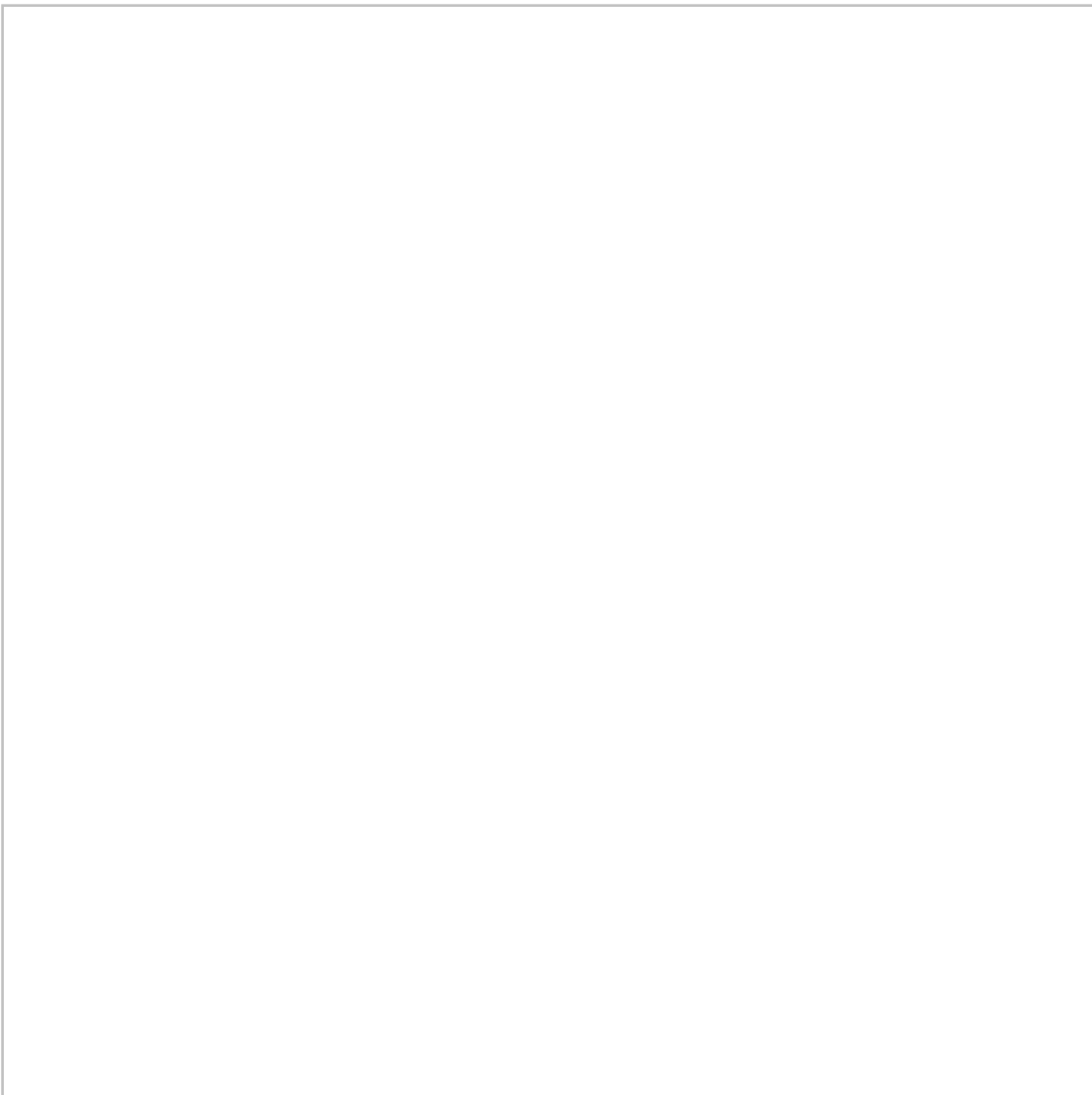


Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**

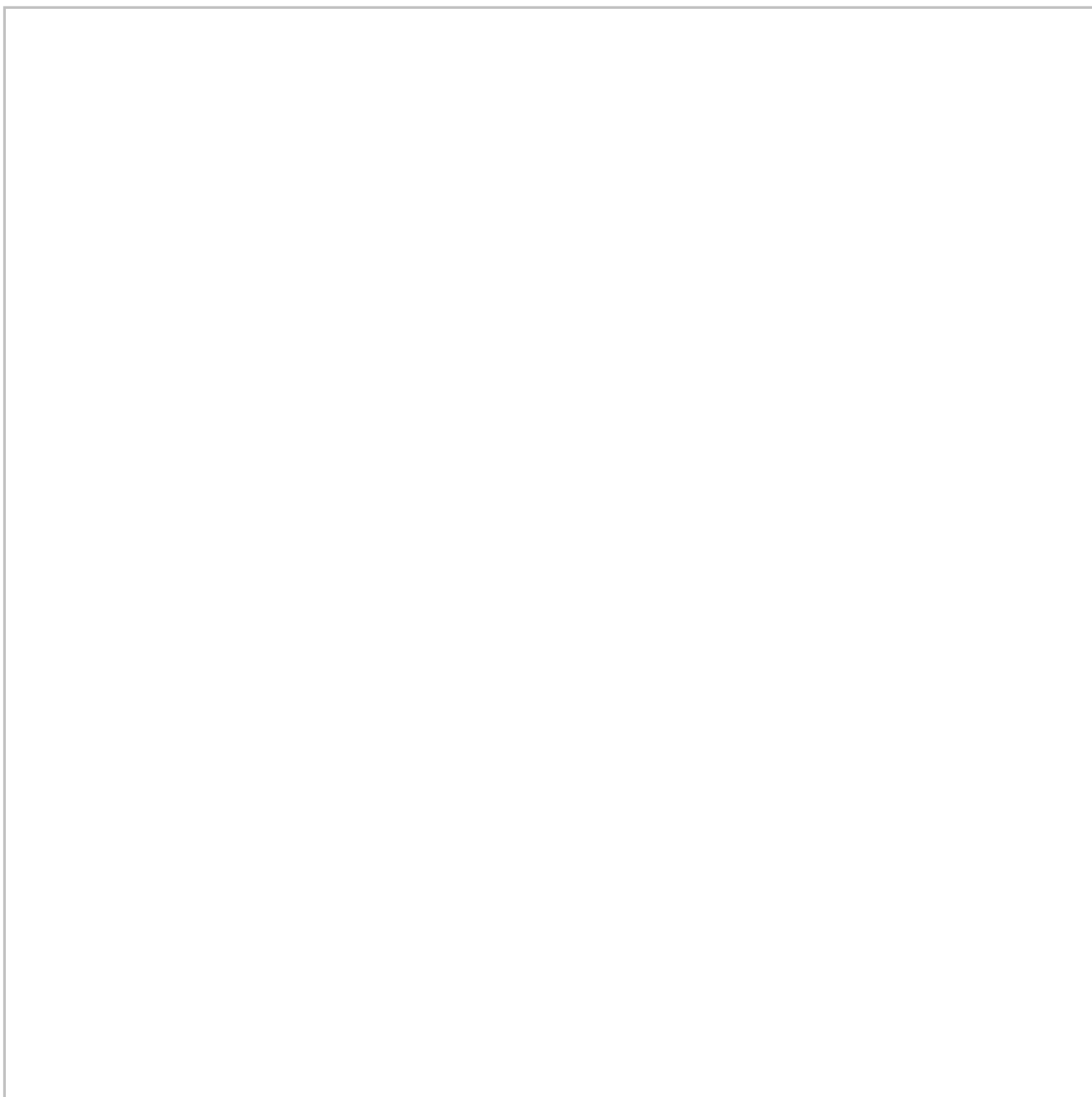


W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**



Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."

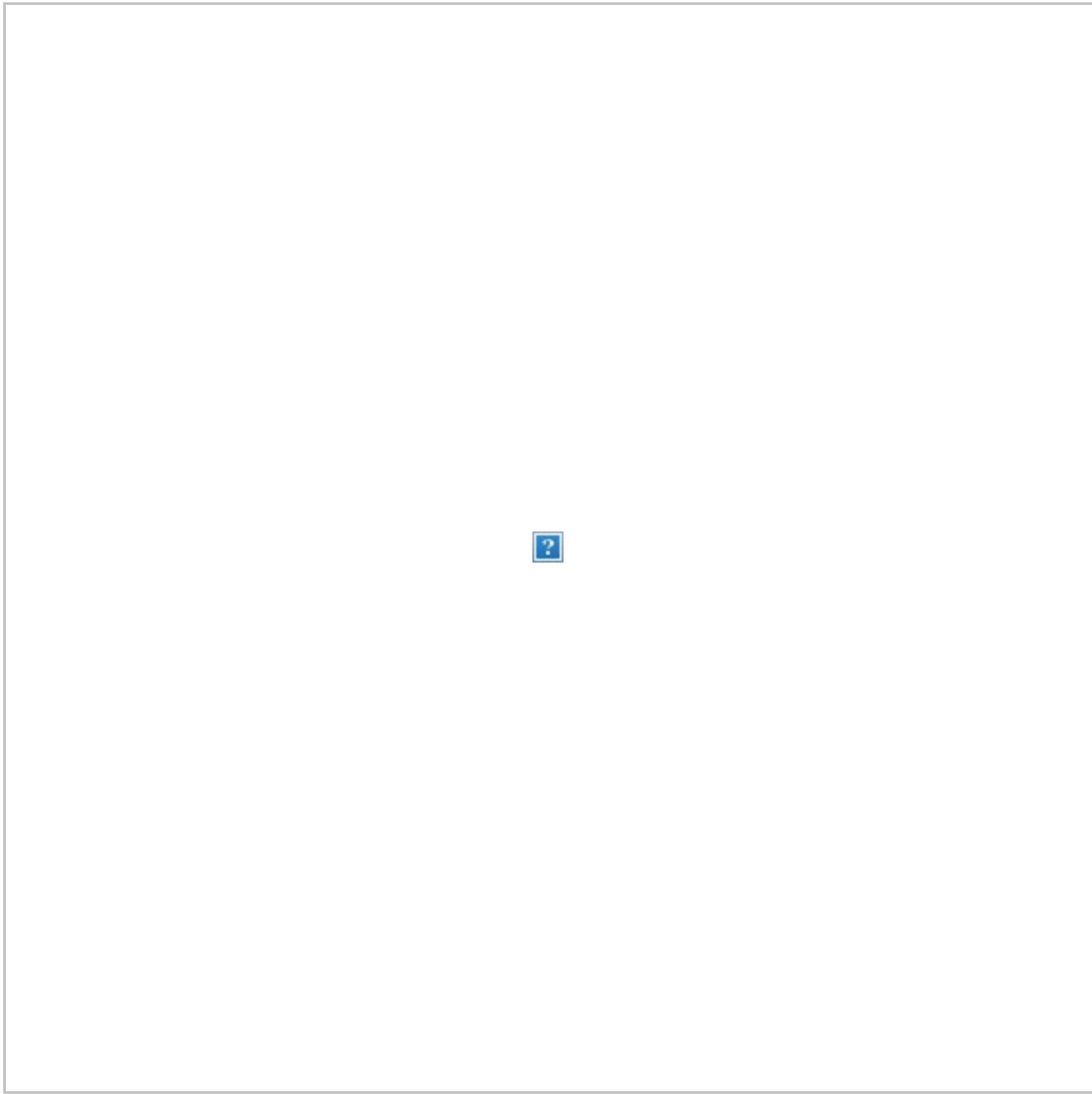


Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

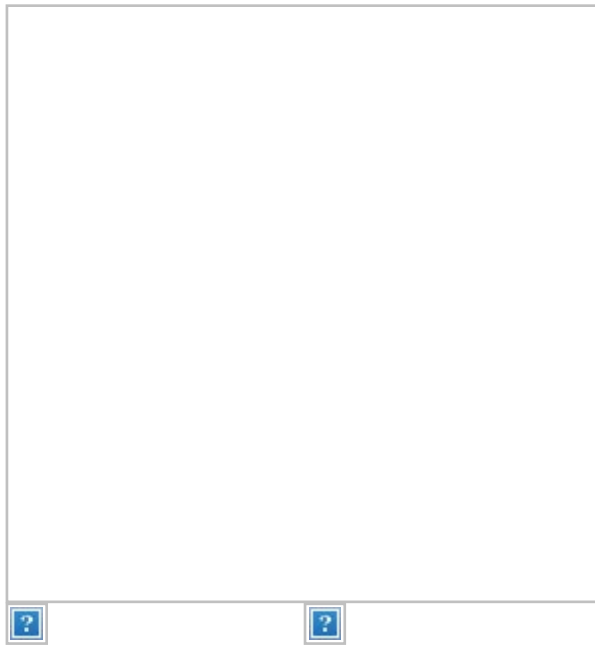
-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."



NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)



### GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**



officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**



**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation.** [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#): "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients.** [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#): "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will ‘fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.’ **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**”

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who’s accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he “really” misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel’s Anthony Man reports](#): “‘The worst part of this is being broke,’ he said. ... ‘I’ve lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I’m not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.’”

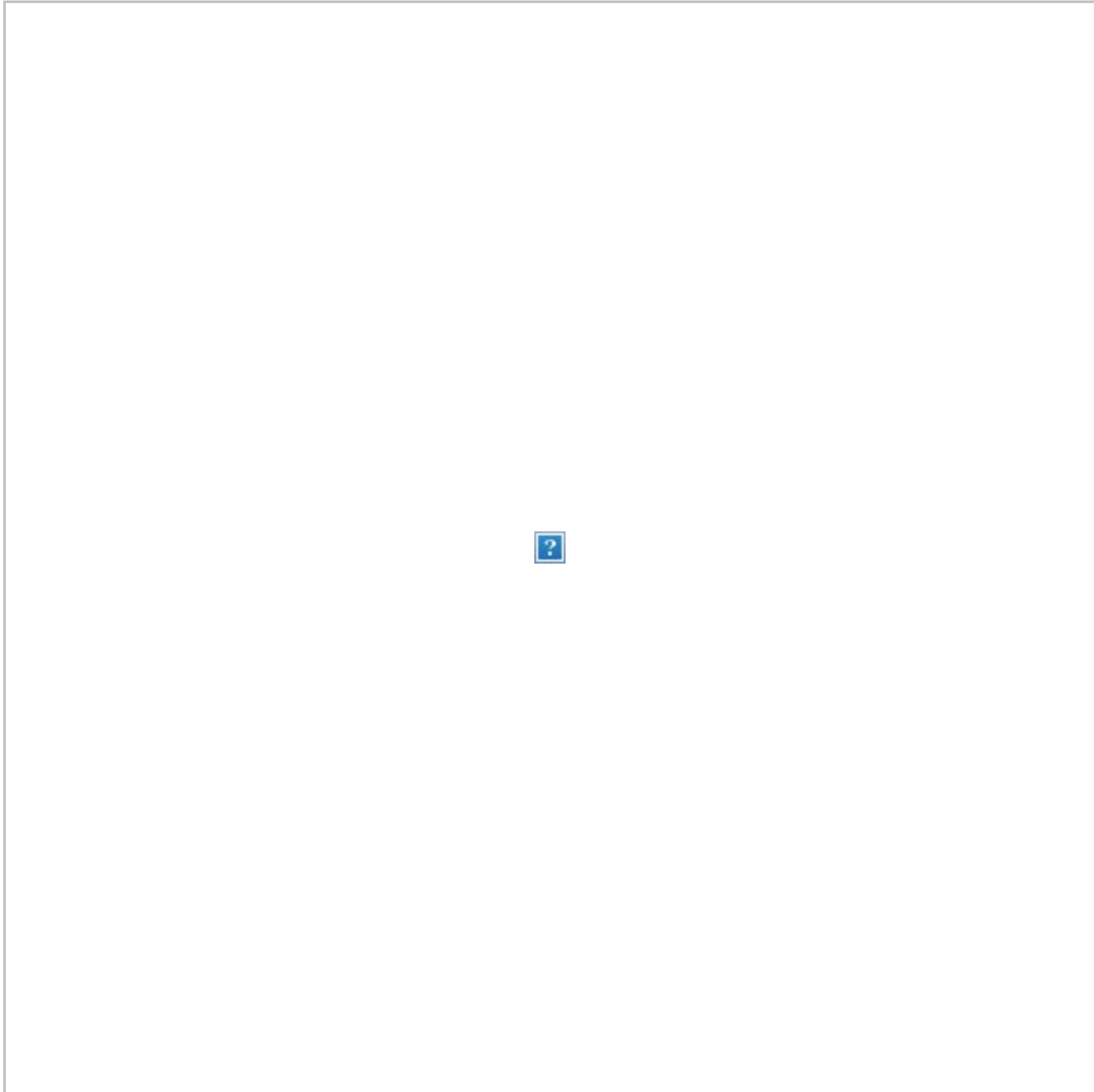
**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

"While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

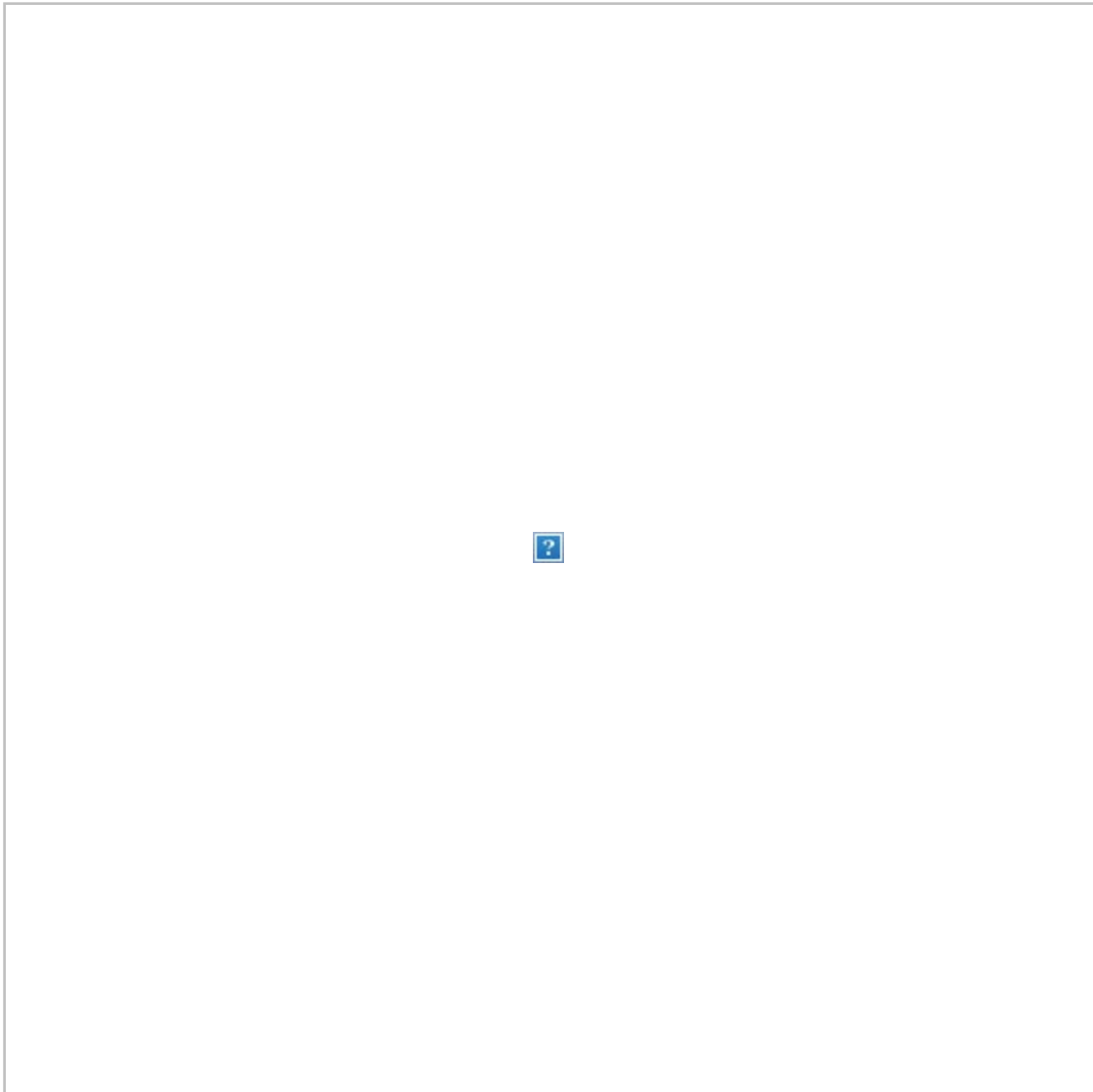
**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report:](#) “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**





President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

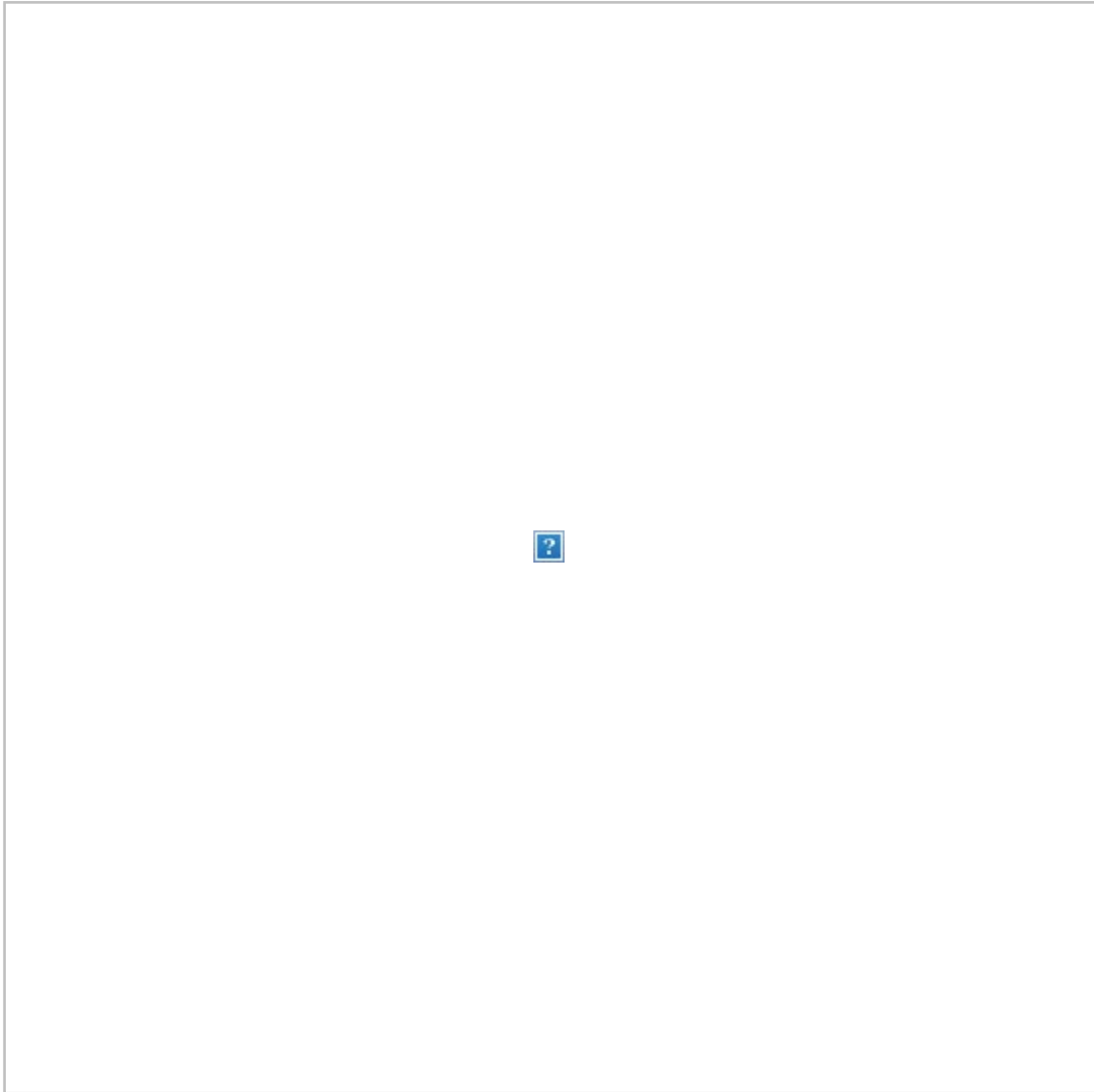
[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**



[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill. [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#):** "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia. [Eli Rosenberg reports](#):** "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

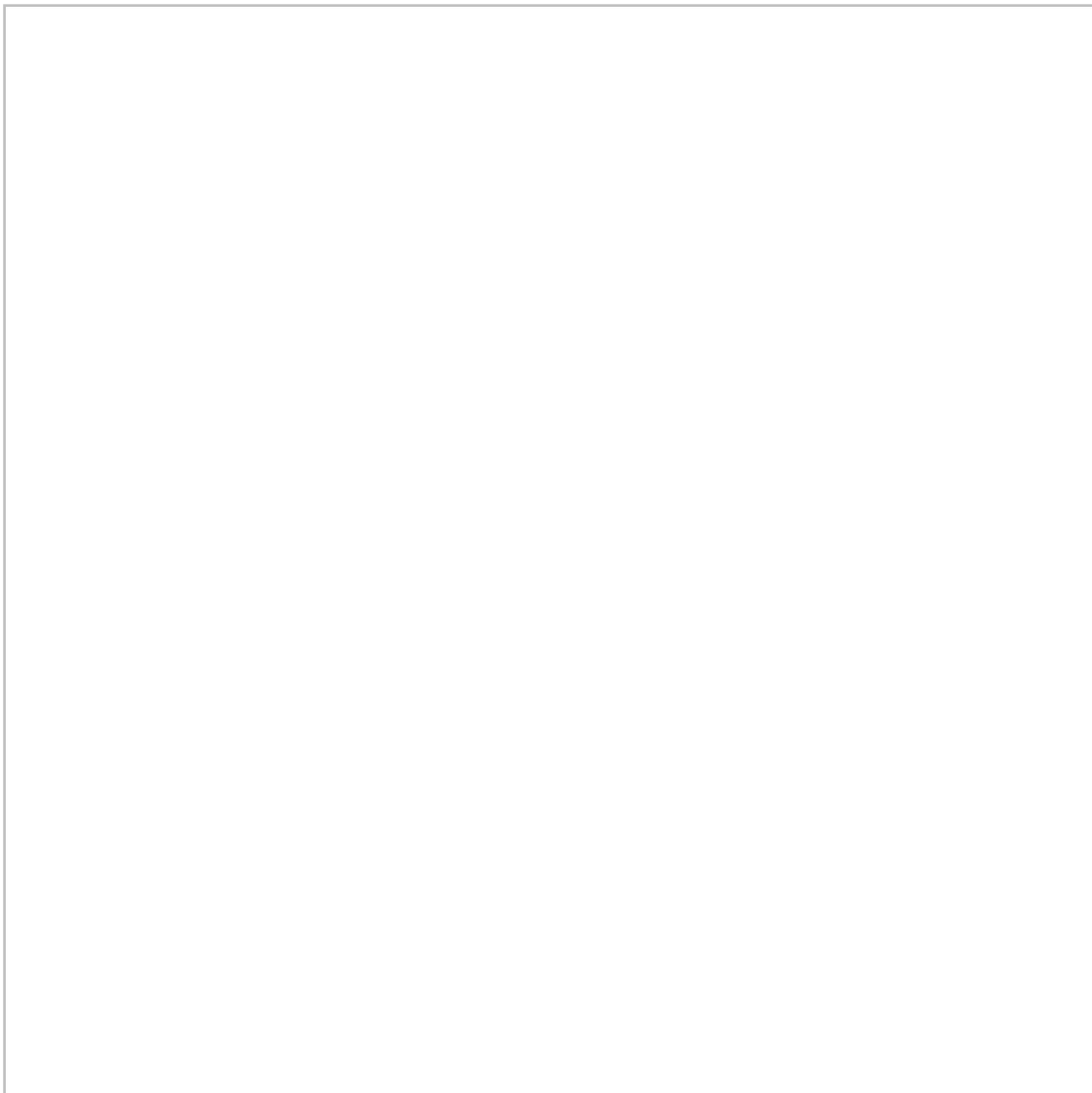
**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

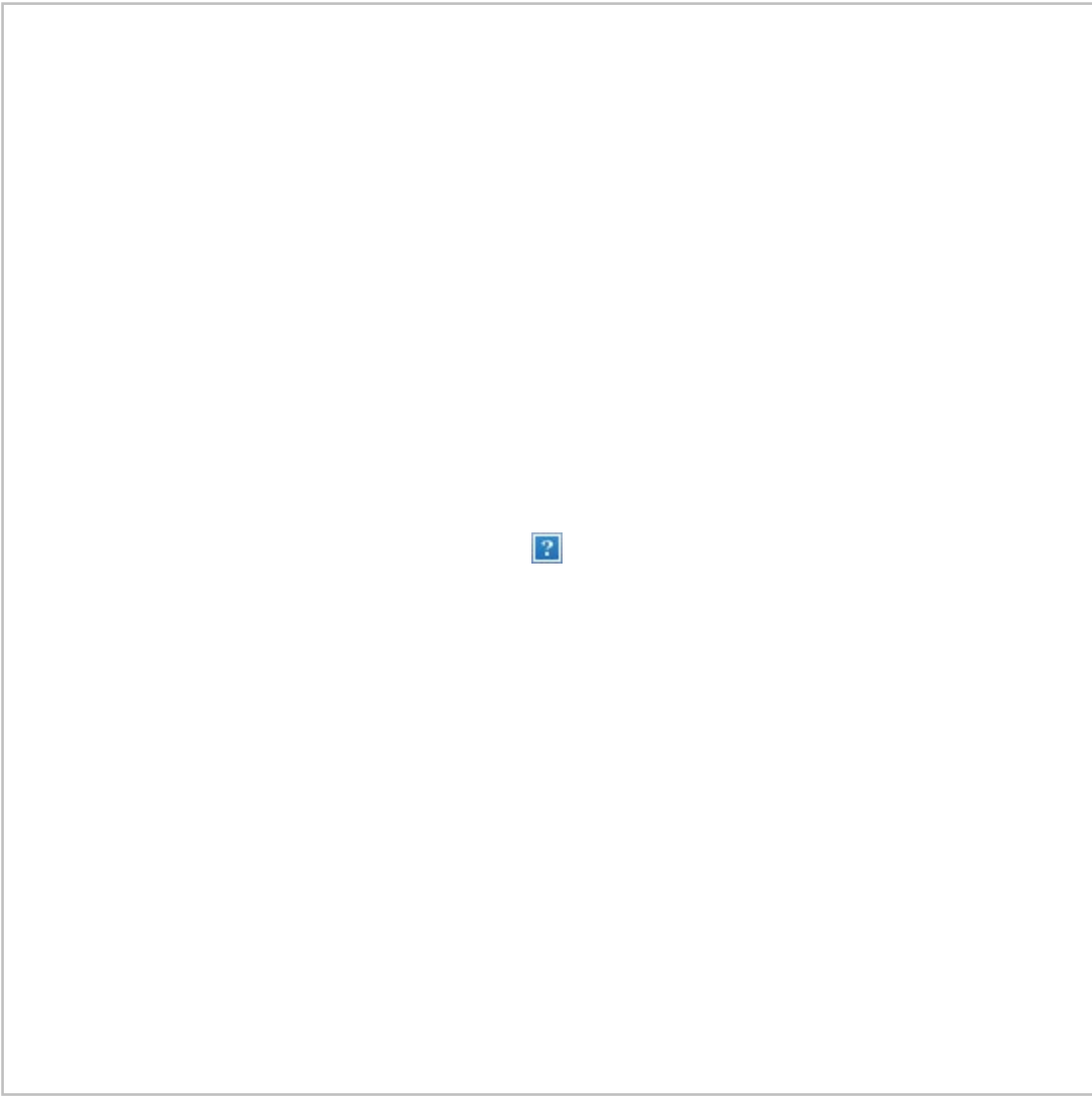
A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:



From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:



From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:

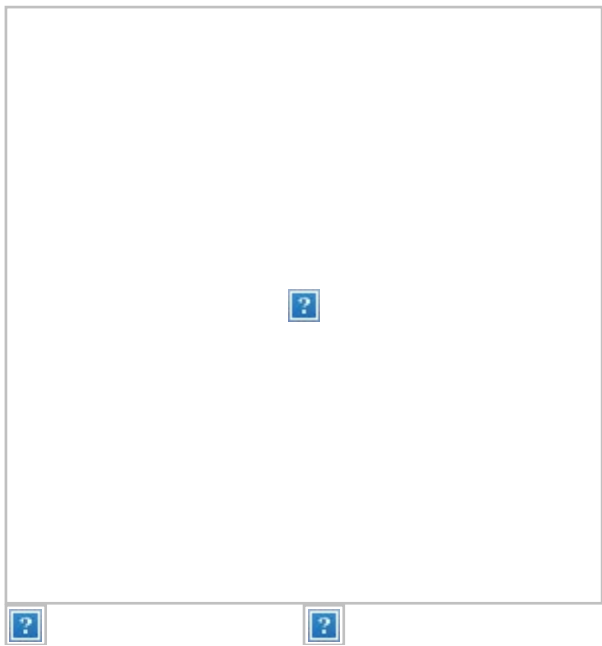
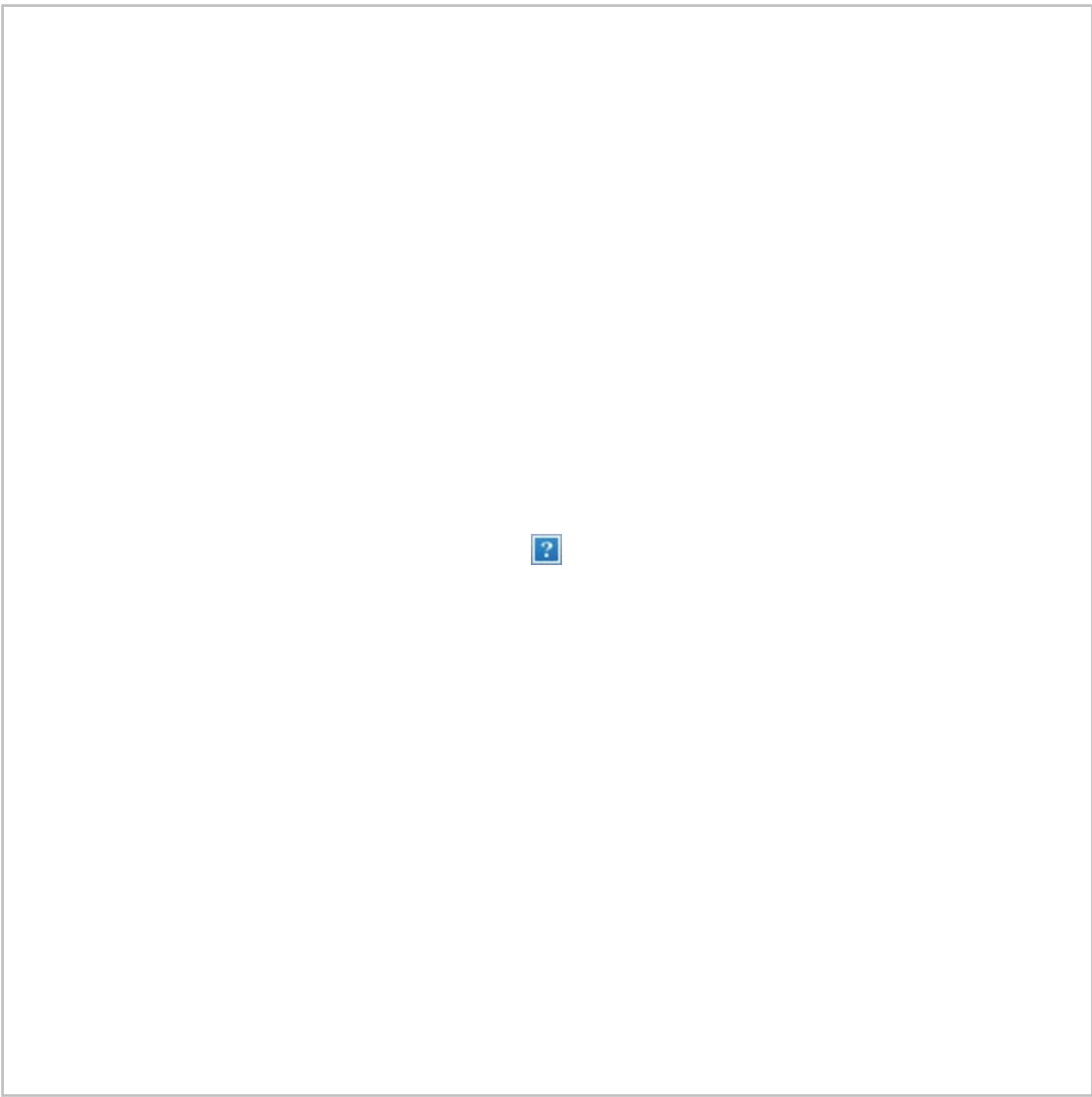




One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:



A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:

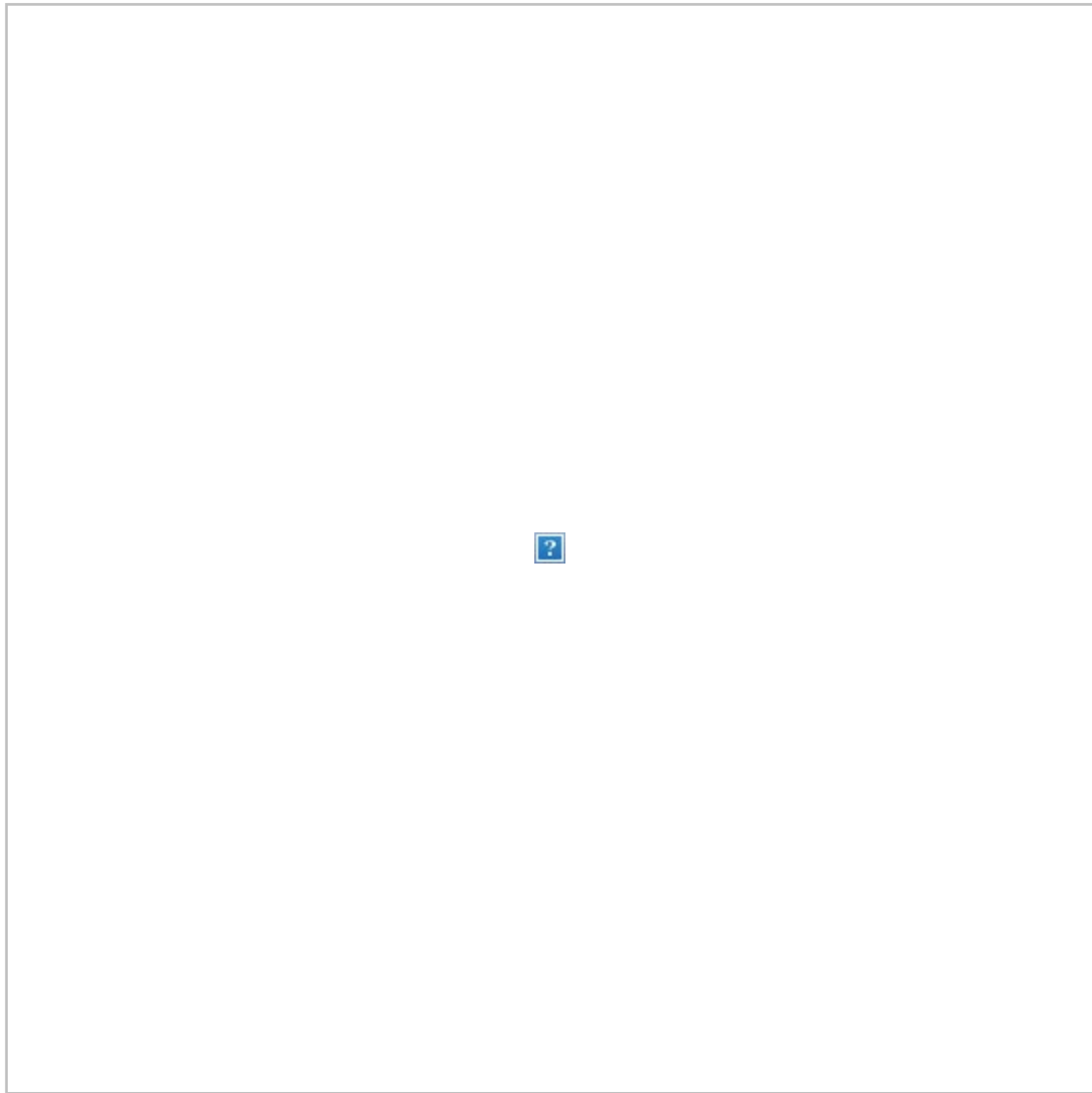


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

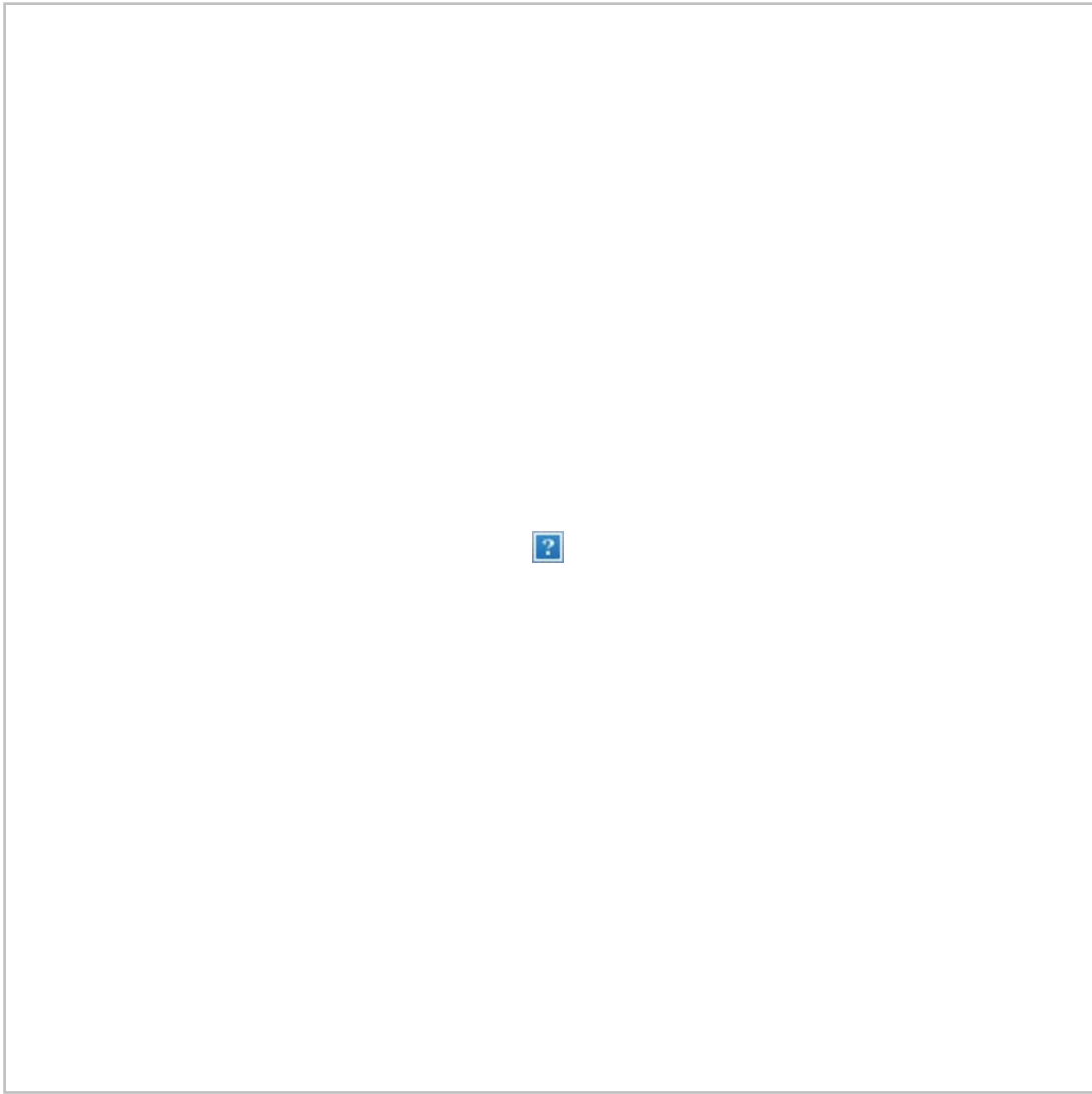


Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



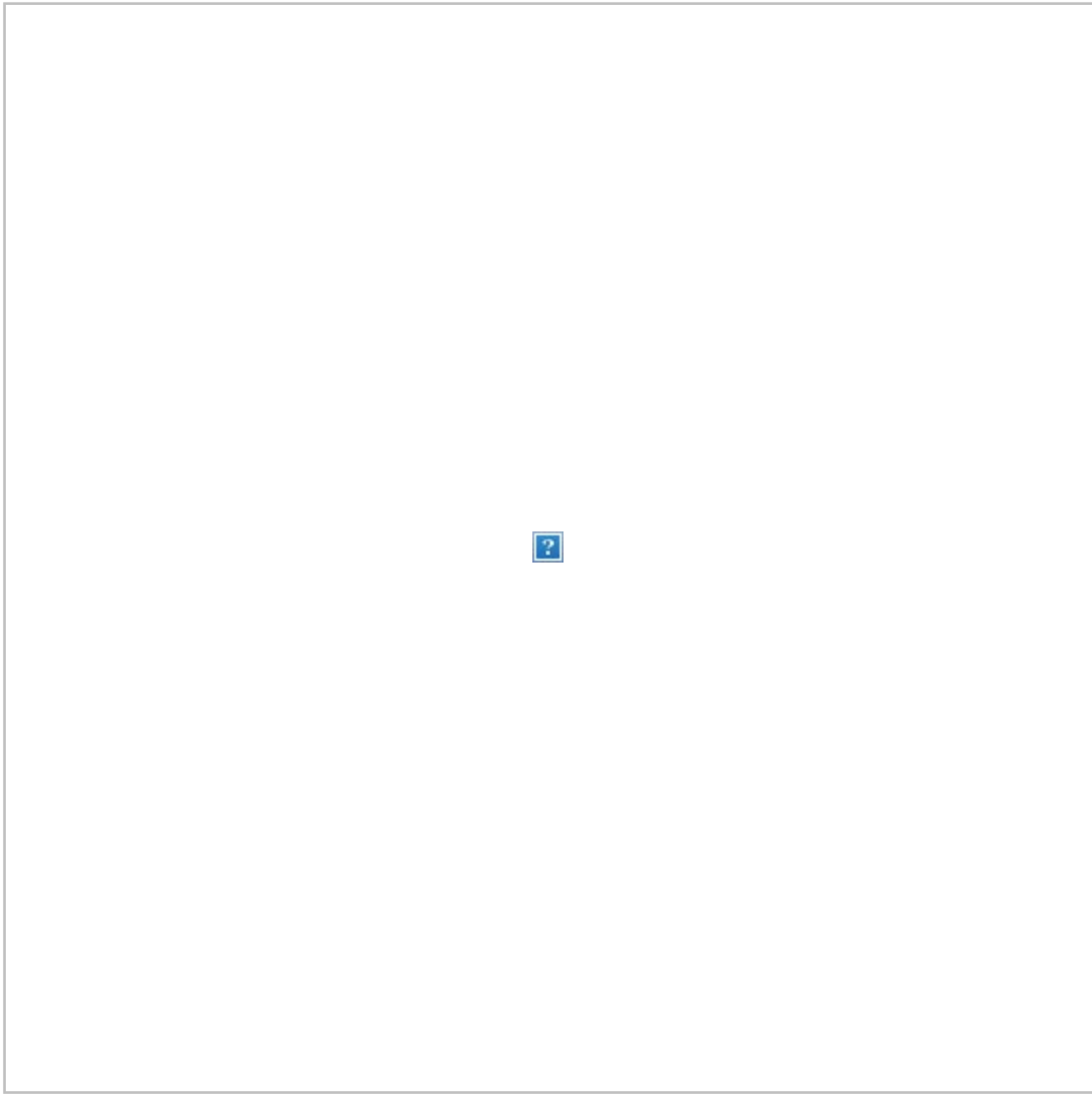
Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:



A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:

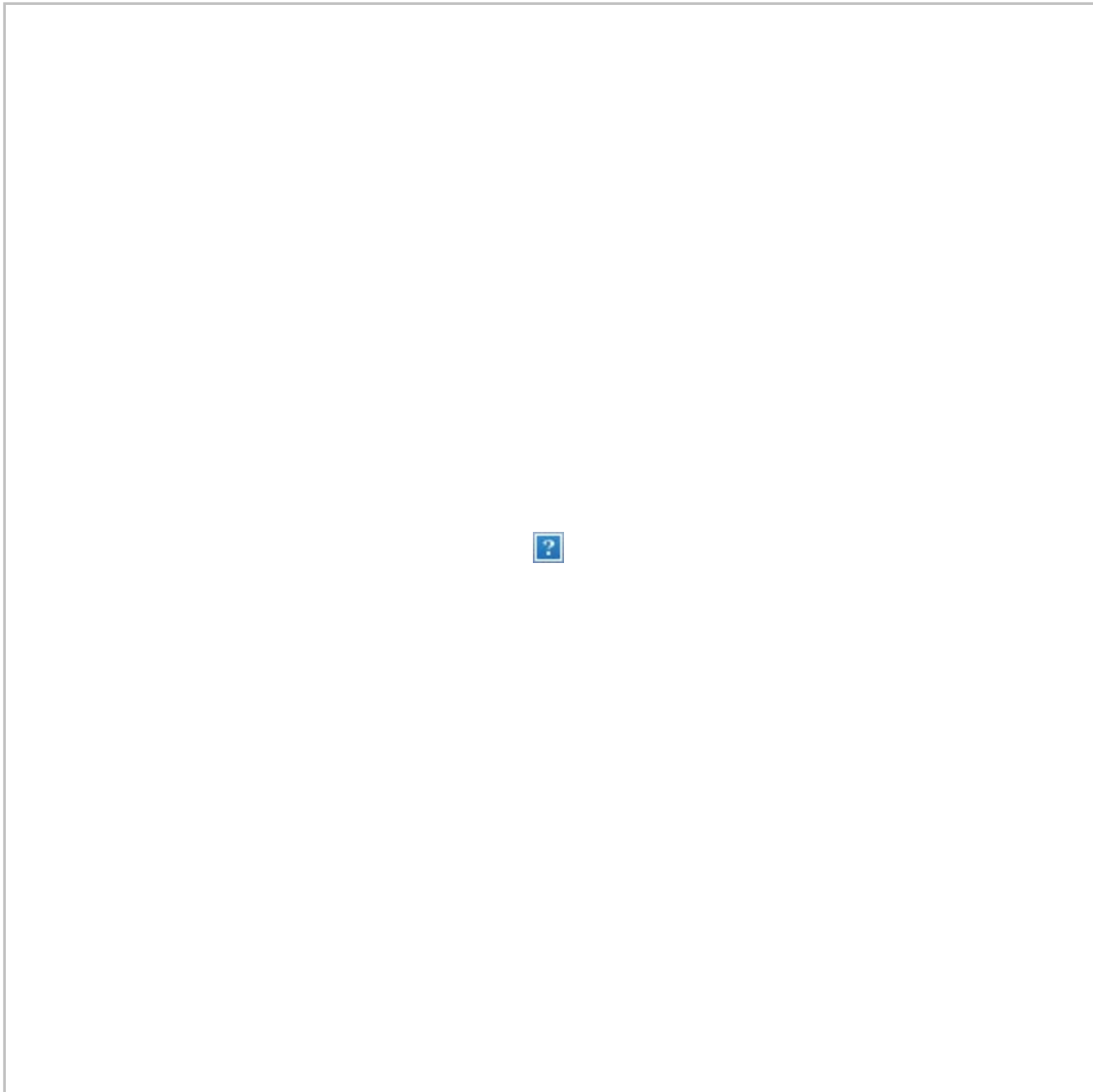


A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

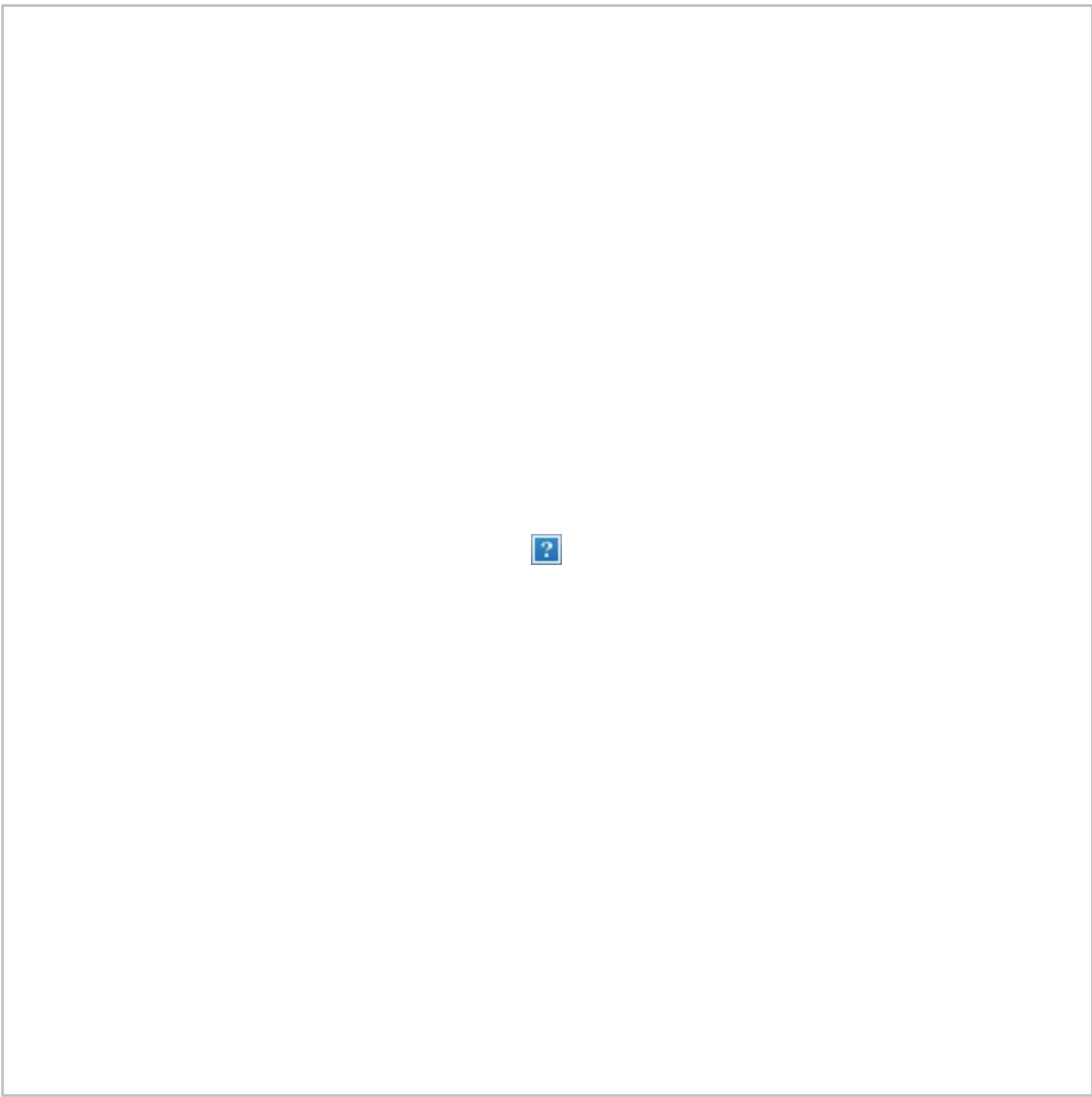


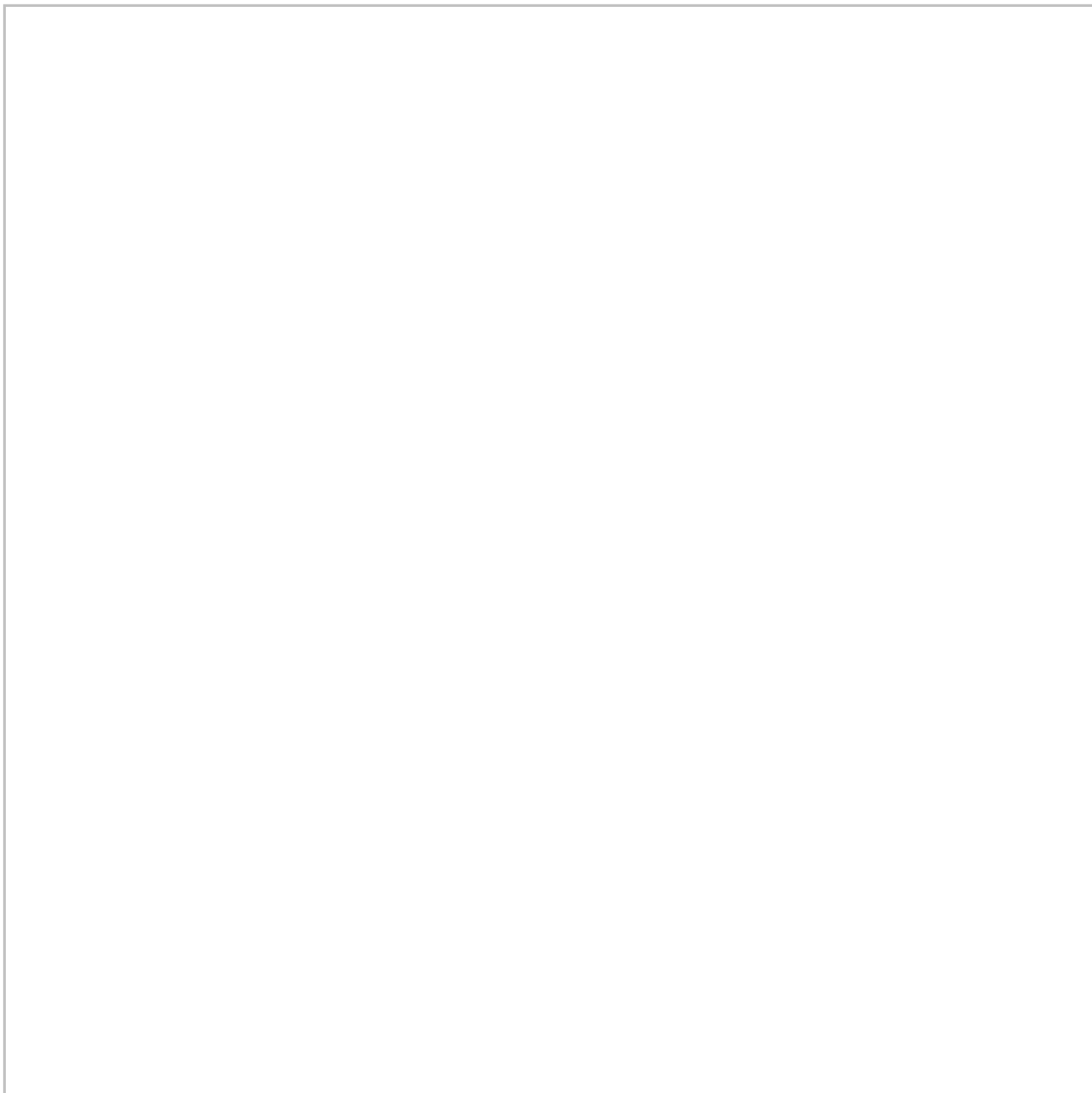
A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:





Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:

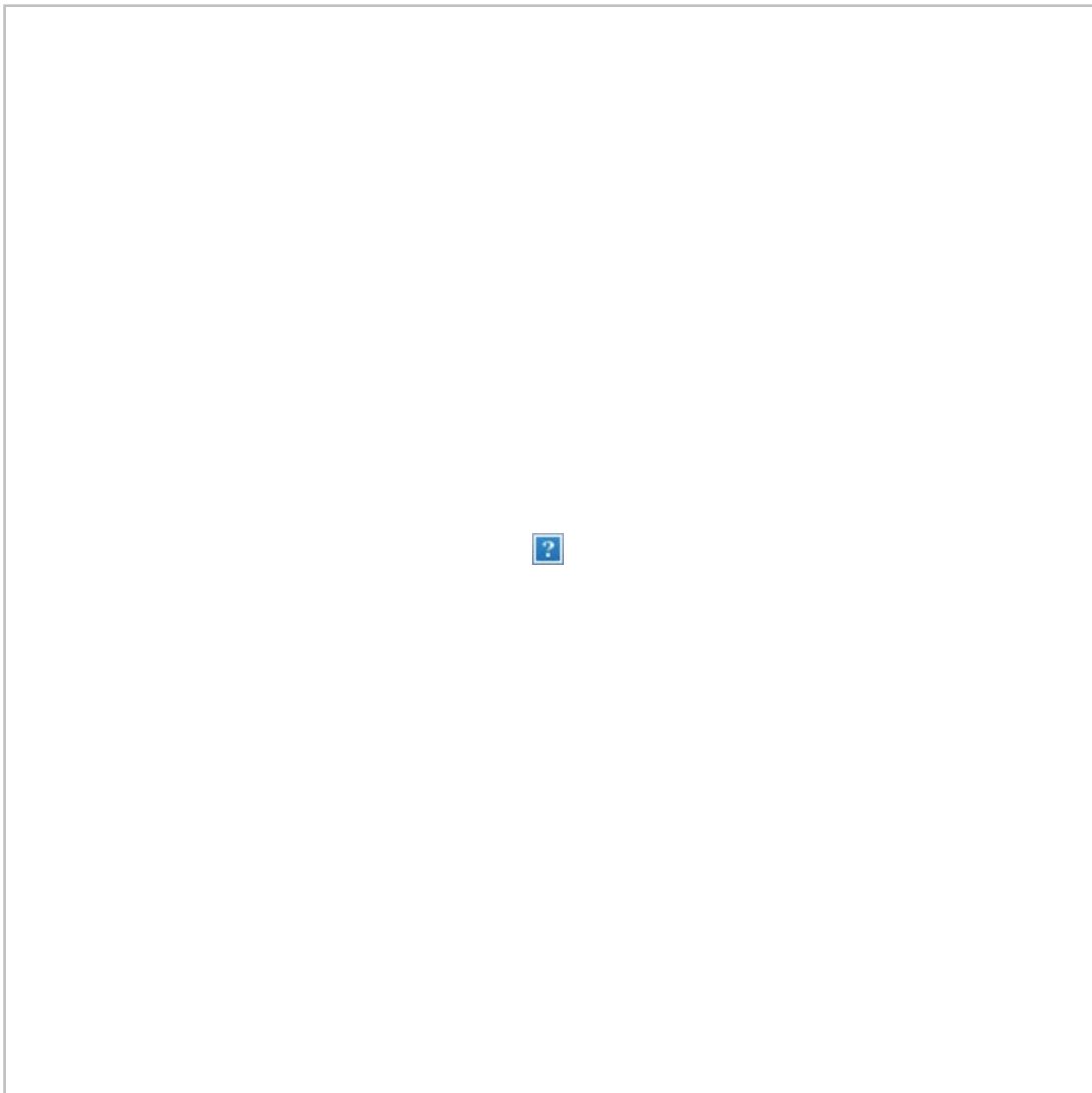




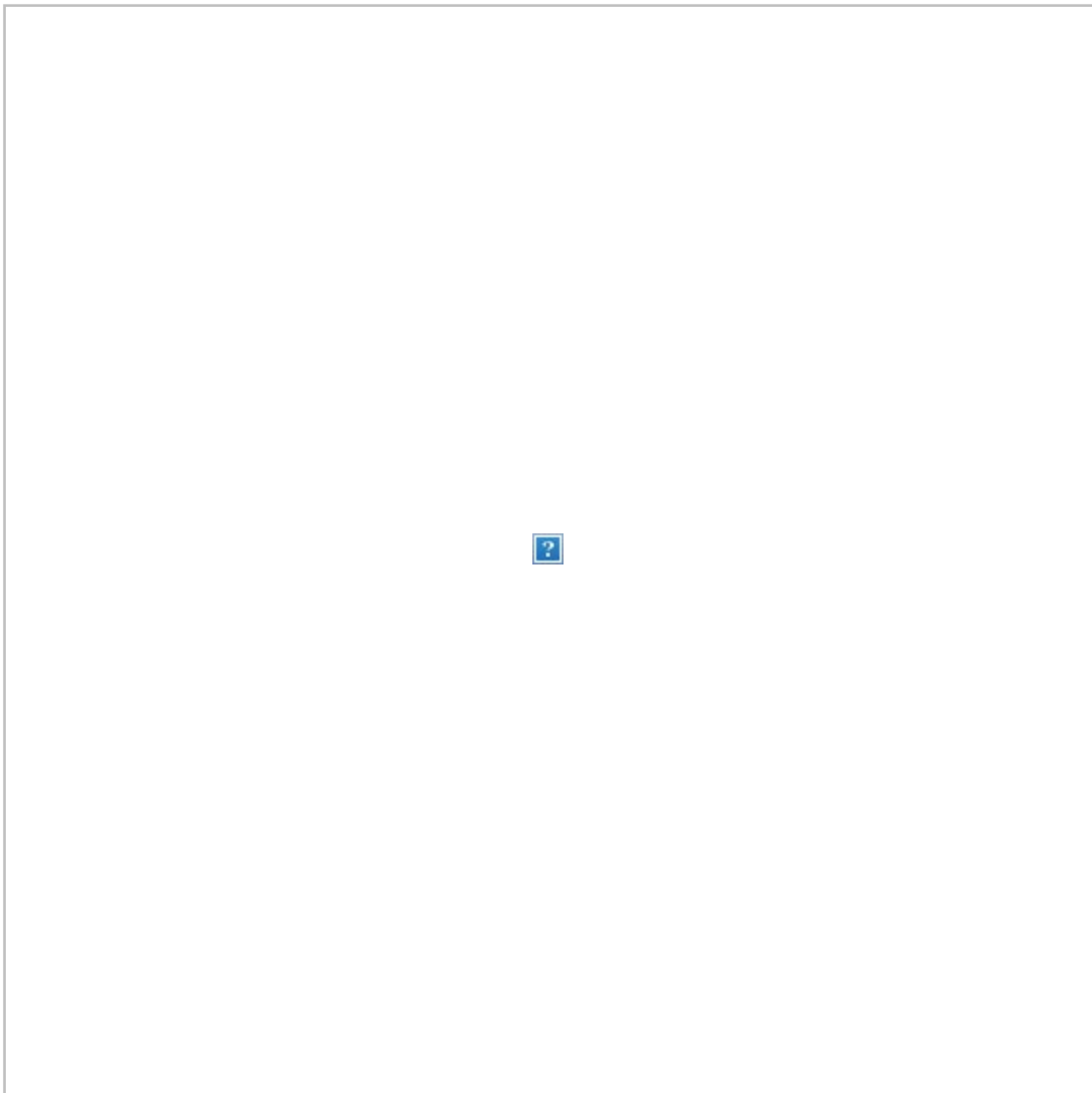
From a news writer for the journal Nature:



Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:



The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:



And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this



is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

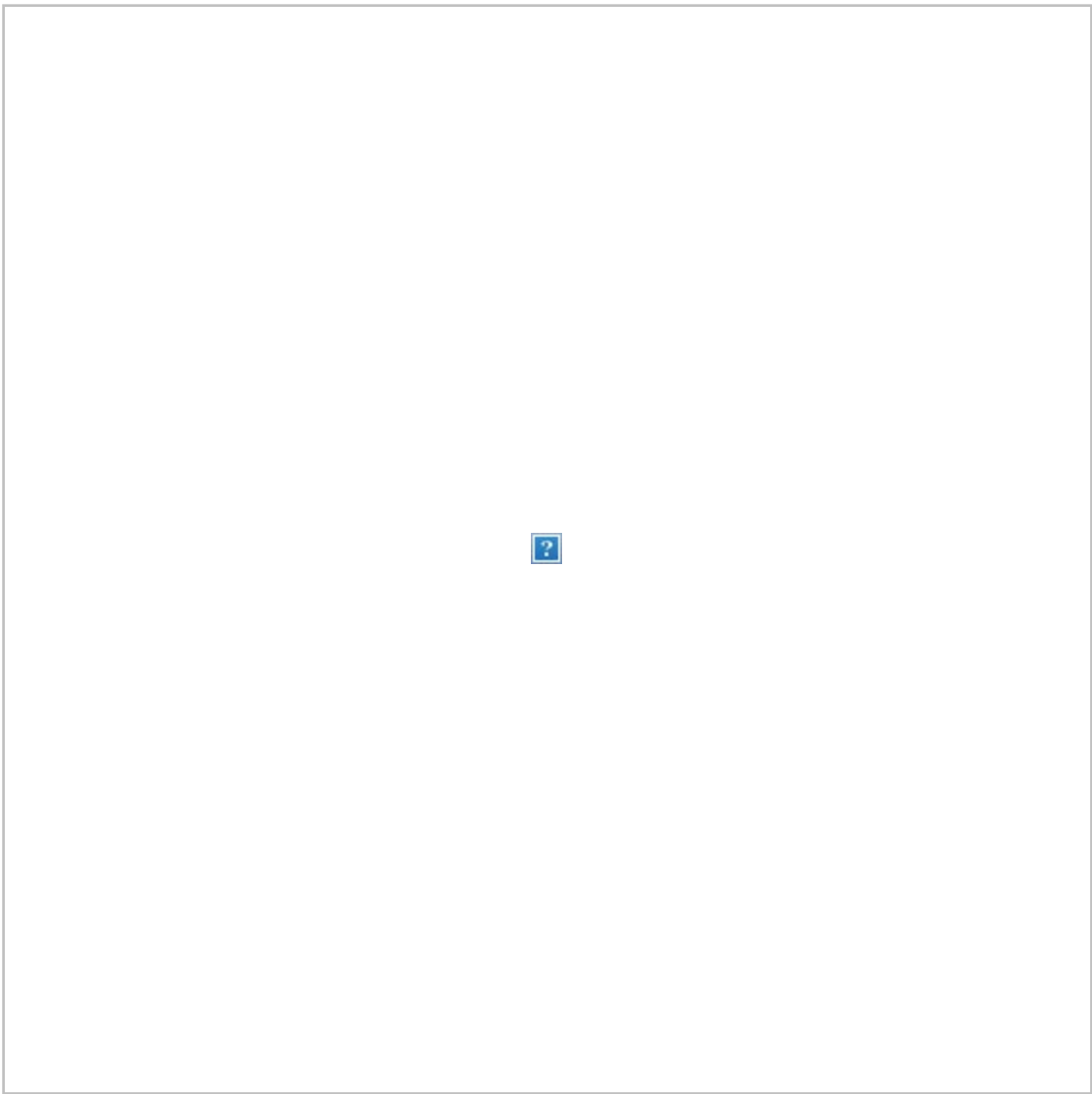
Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:



Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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The Daily 202: James Comey says he's more worried about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

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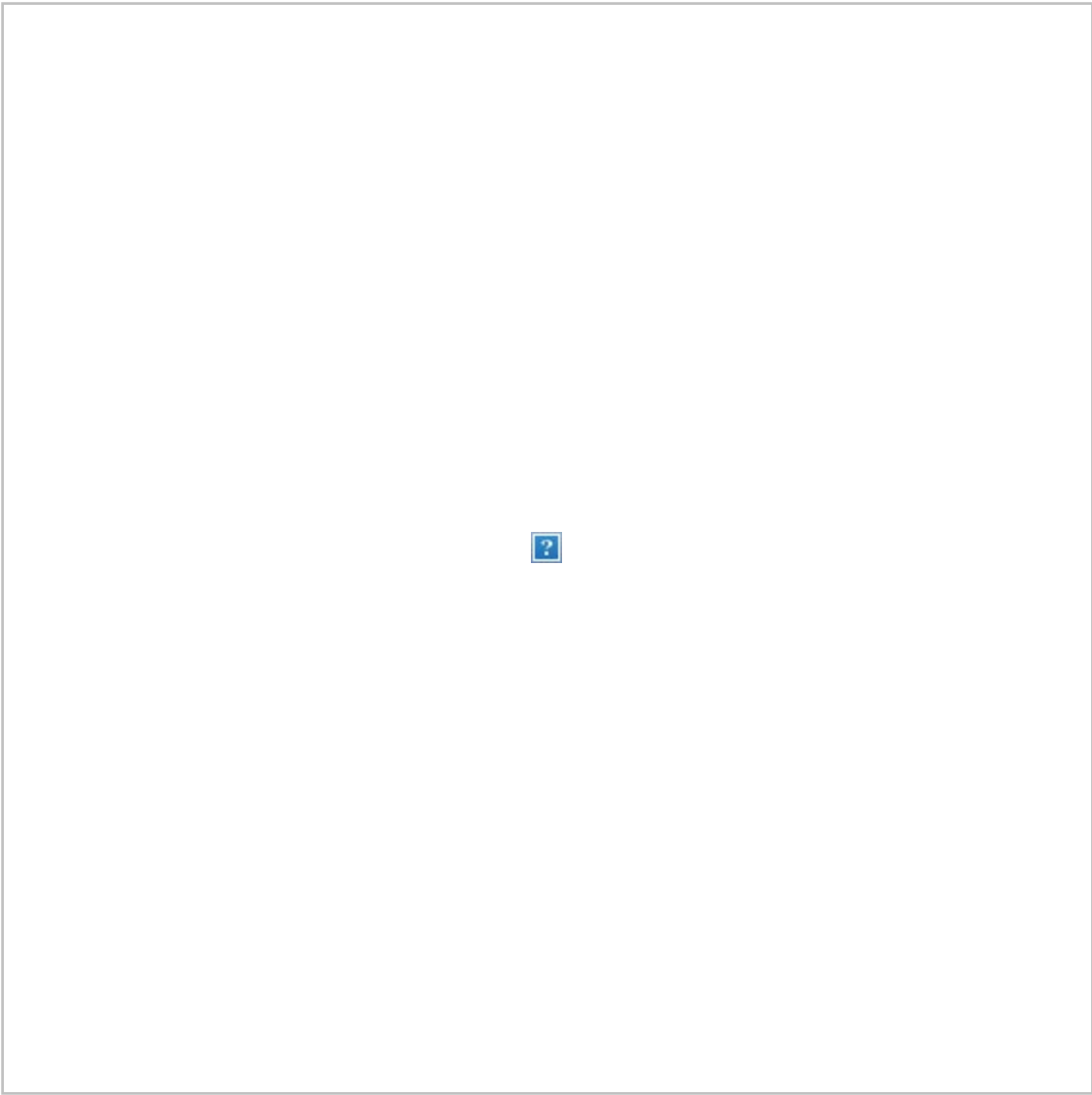
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# The Daily 202

Share:   Listen to The Big Idea

## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

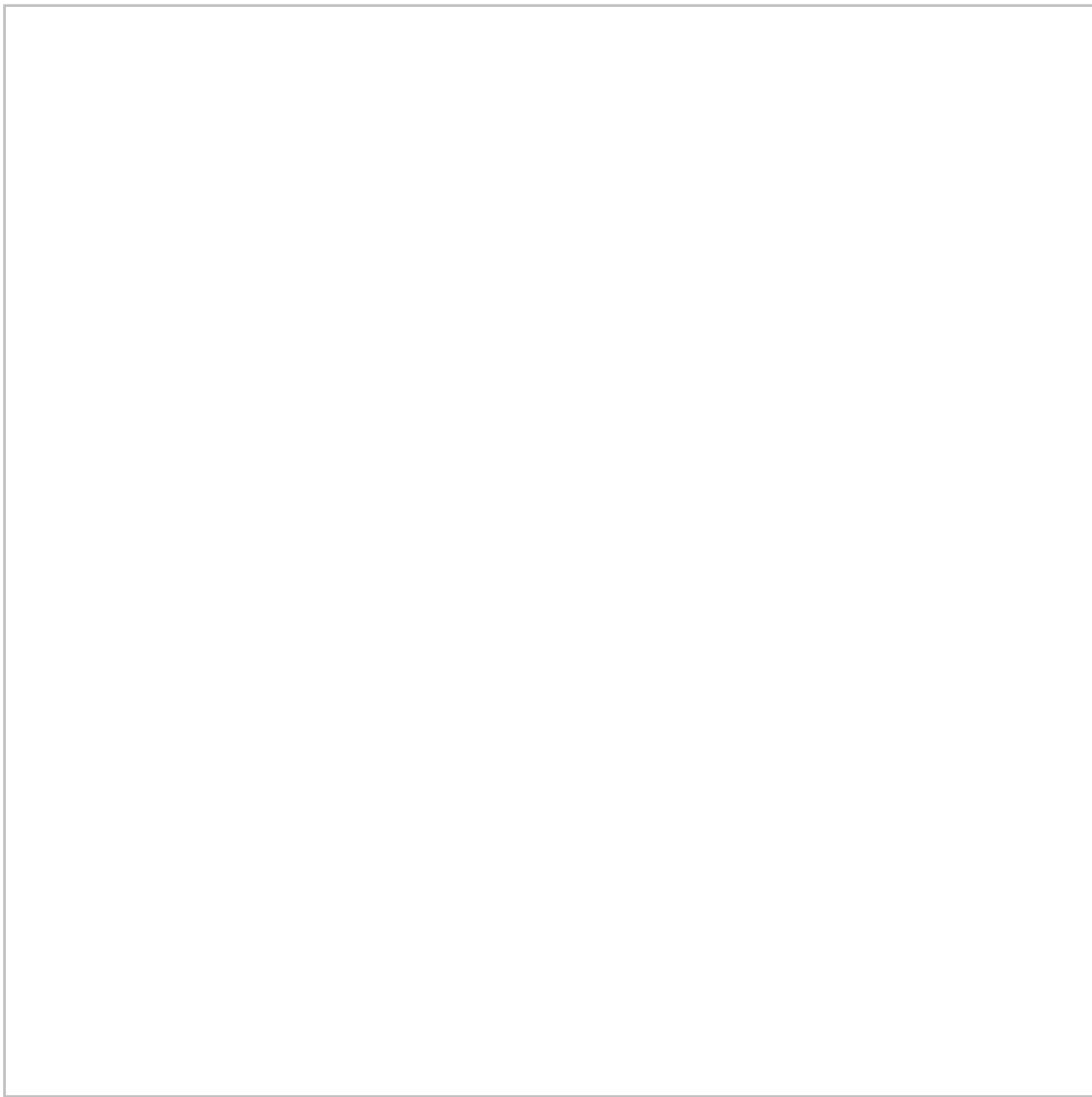
**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."



Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives



explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”



Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

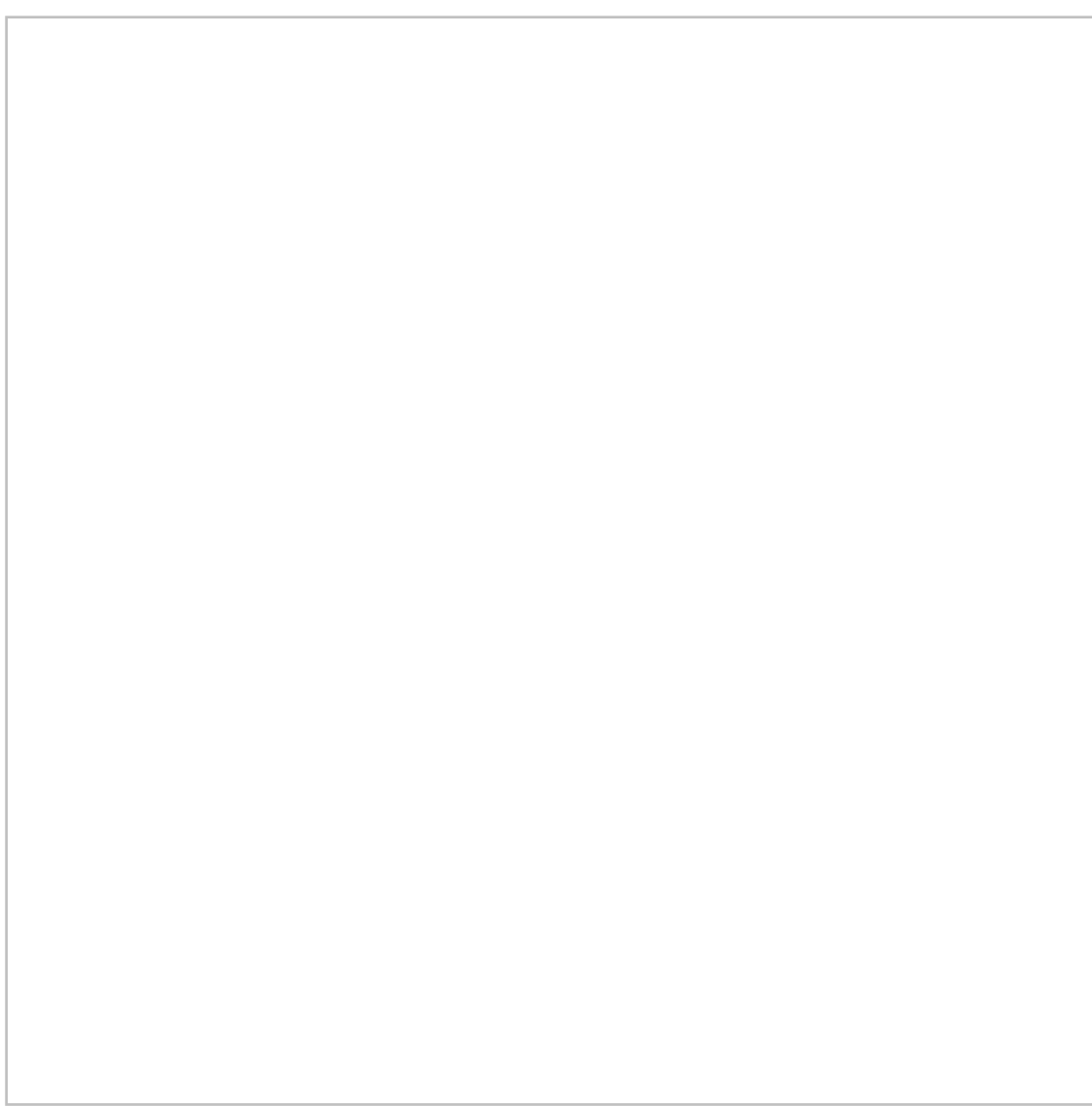
“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”



William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

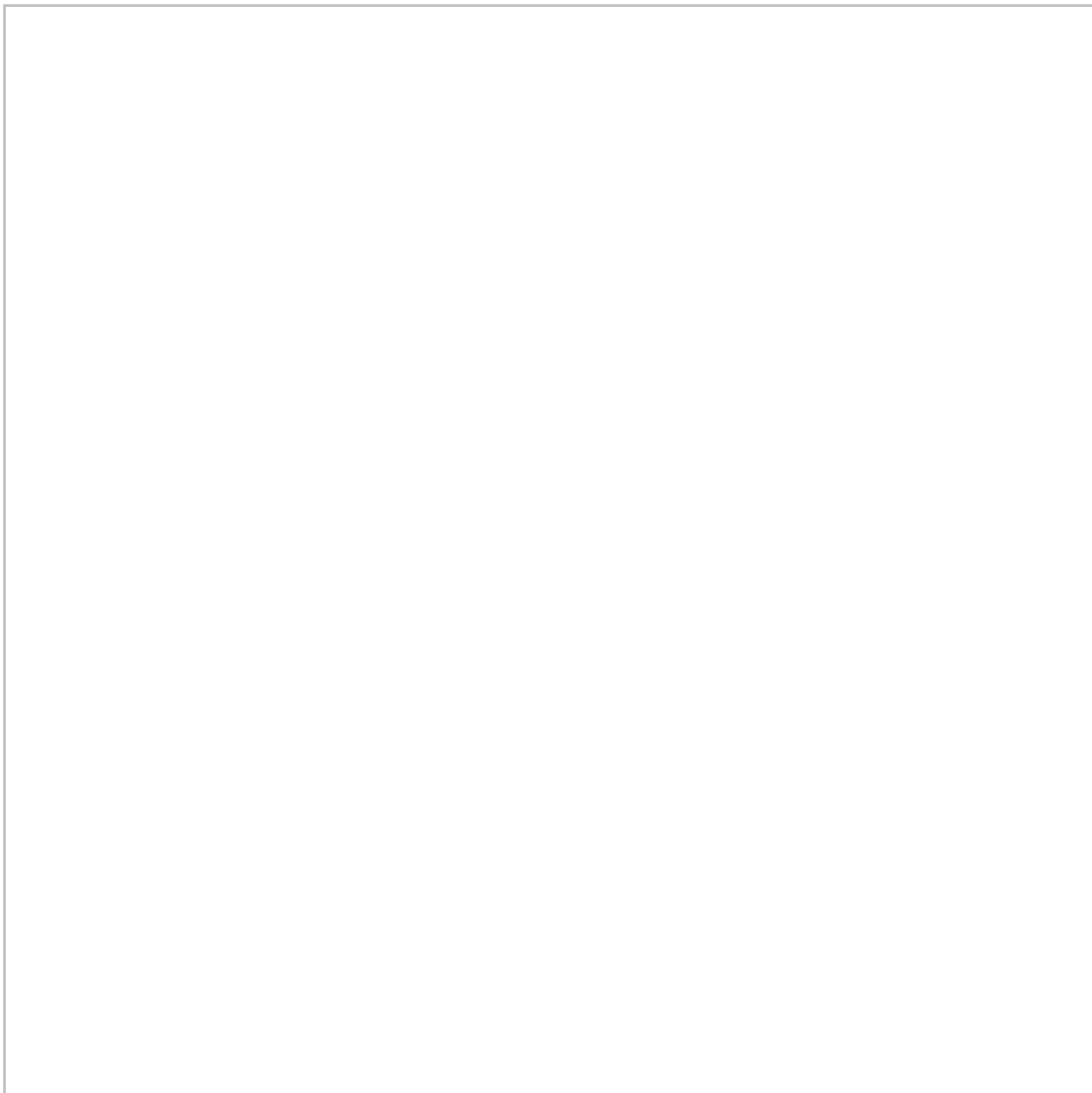
**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**



he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

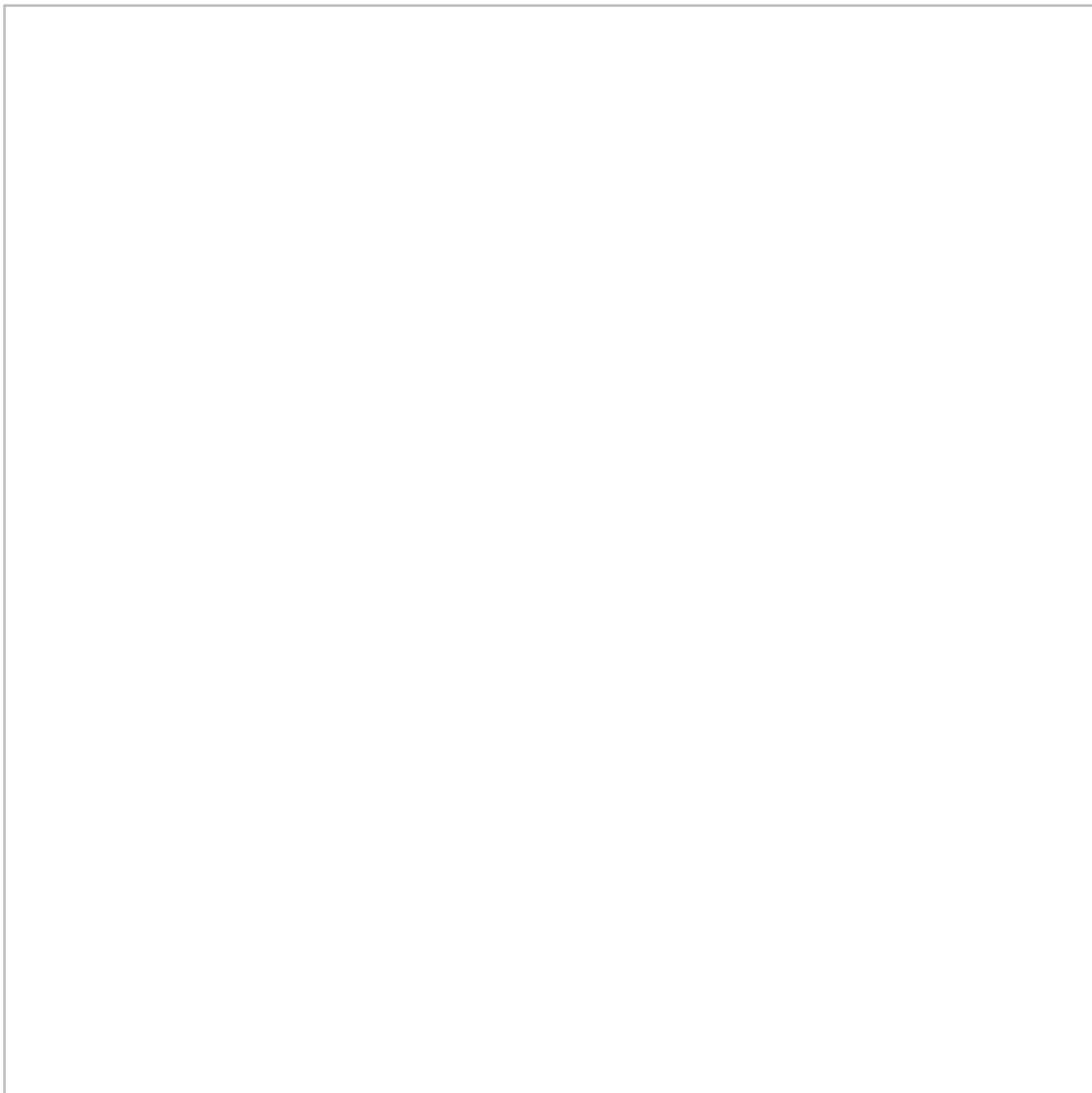


Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.



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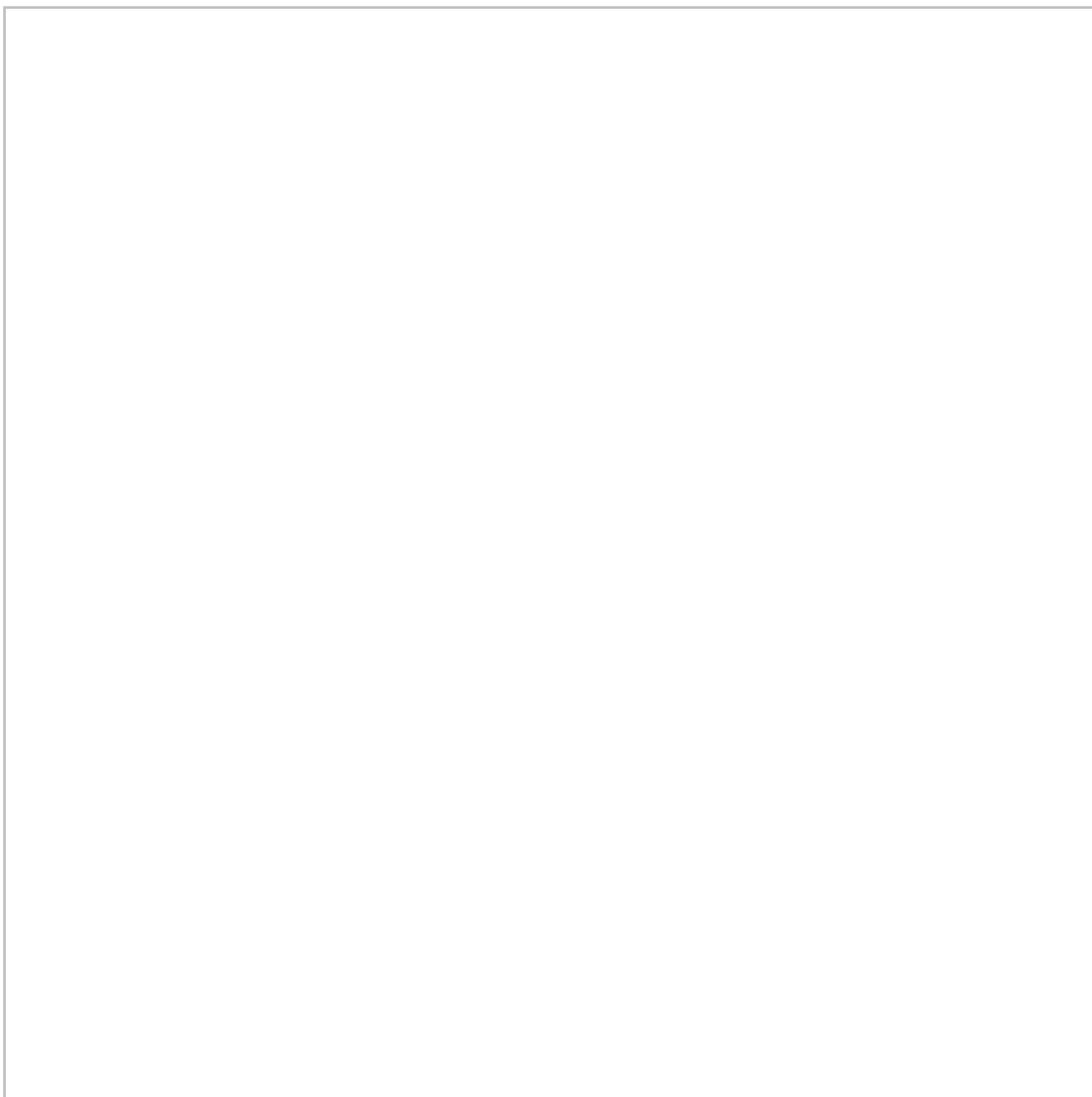
**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."



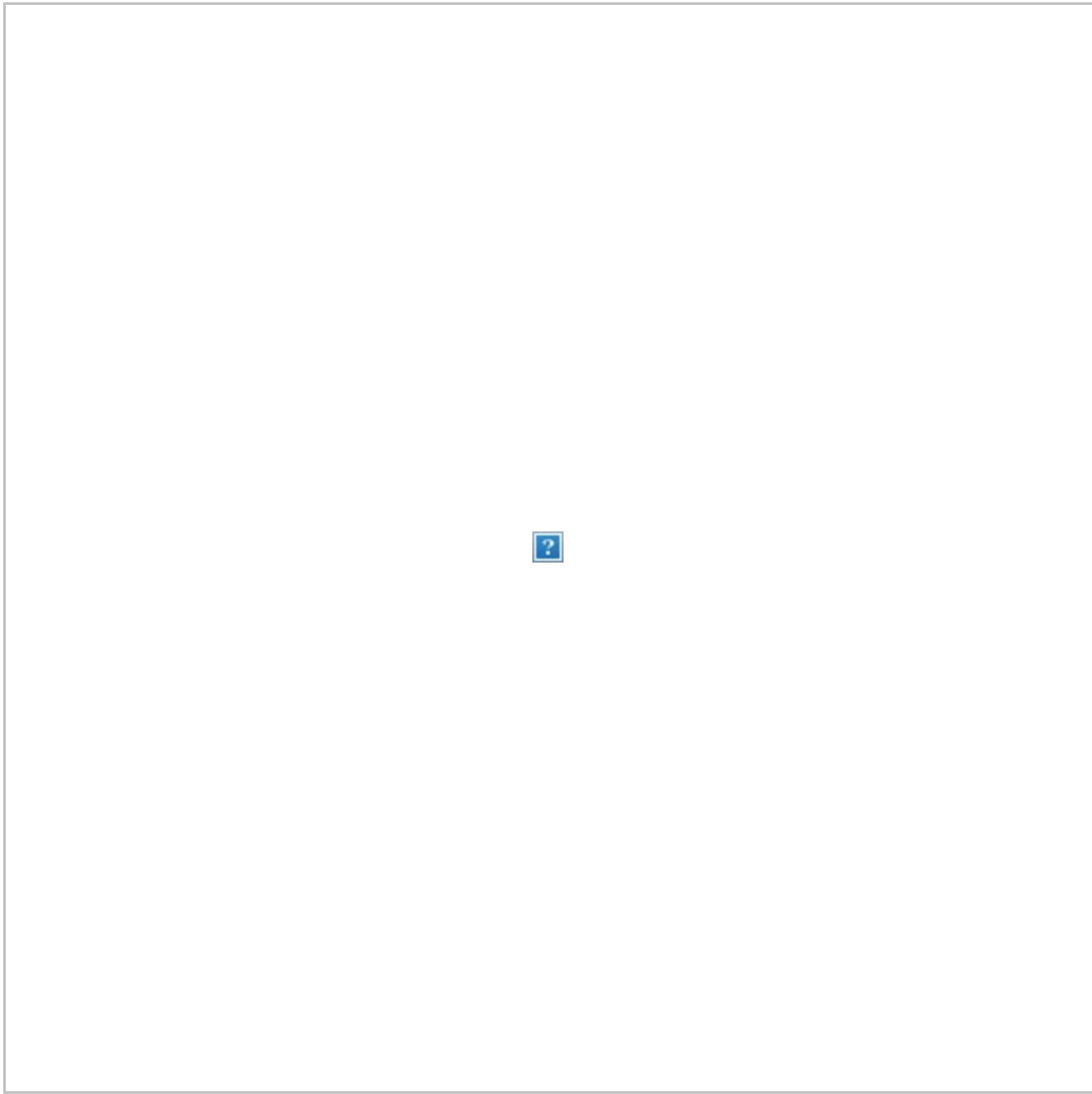
Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

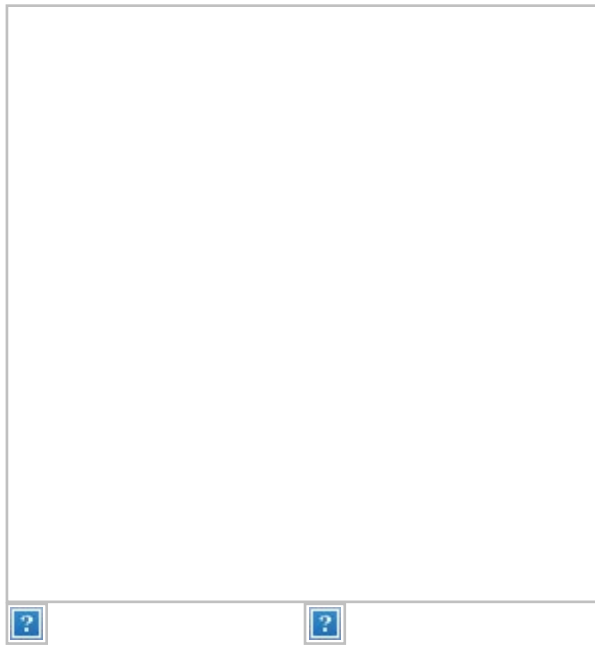
meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."





NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)



## GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**



**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation.** [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#): "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients.** [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#): "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will ‘fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.’ **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**”

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who’s accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he “really” misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel’s Anthony Man reports](#): “‘The worst part of this is being broke,’ he said. ... ‘I’ve lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I’m not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.’”

**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

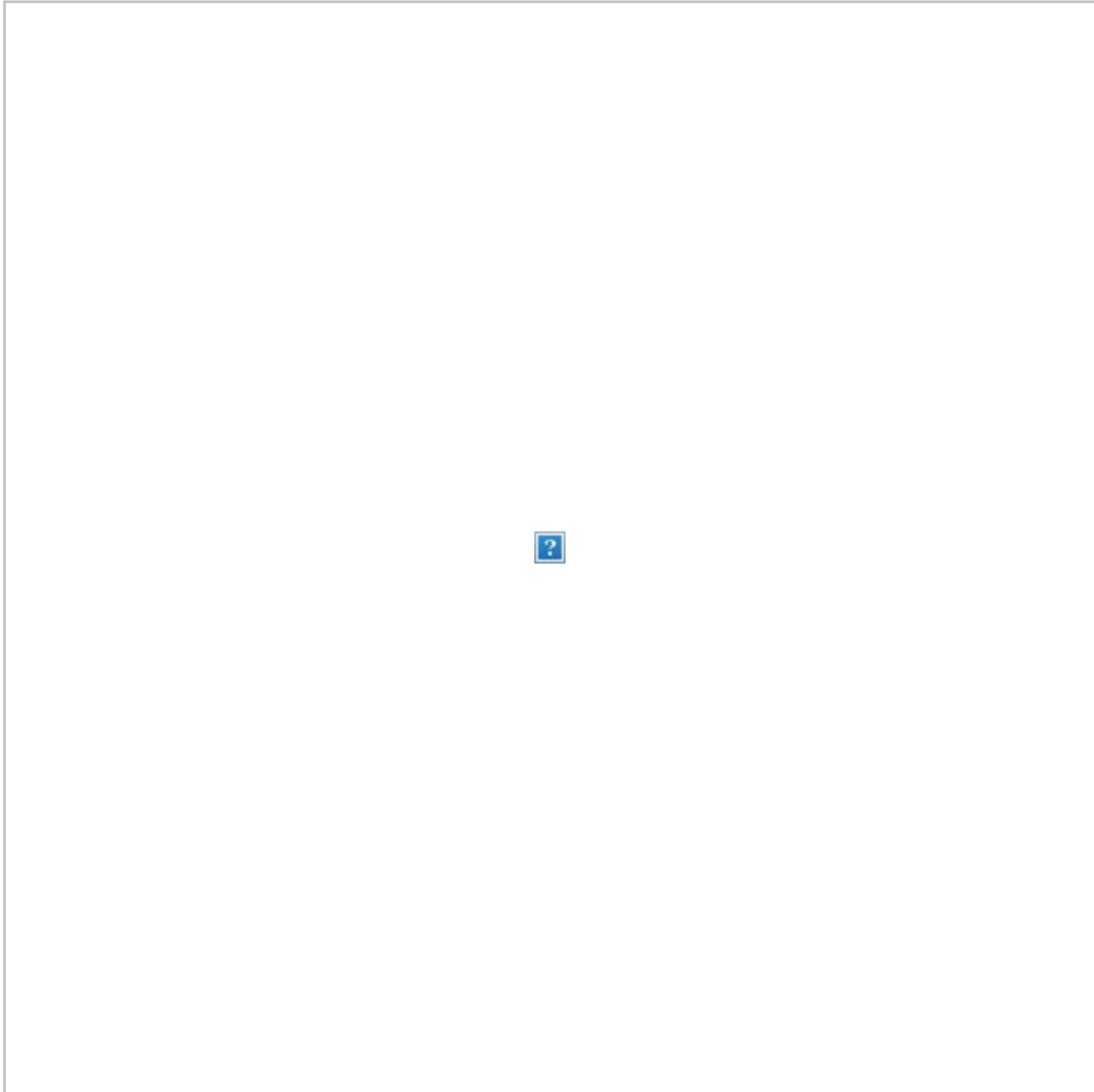
**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

“While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid.”

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** “My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation ‘the Sackler family’ — because of some family members’ association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his



death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

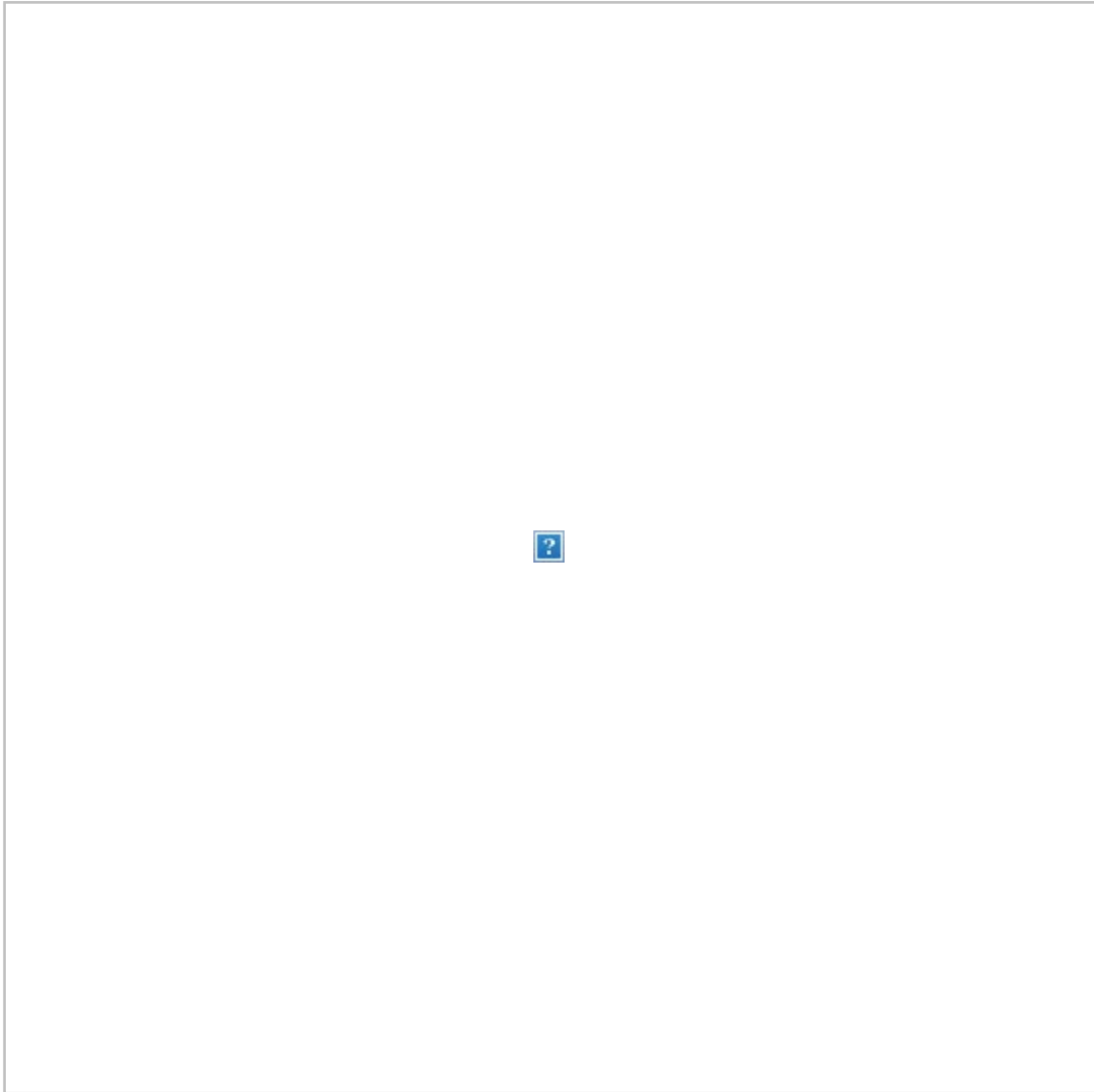
**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."





Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill. [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#):** "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia. [Eli Rosenberg reports](#):** "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and



amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

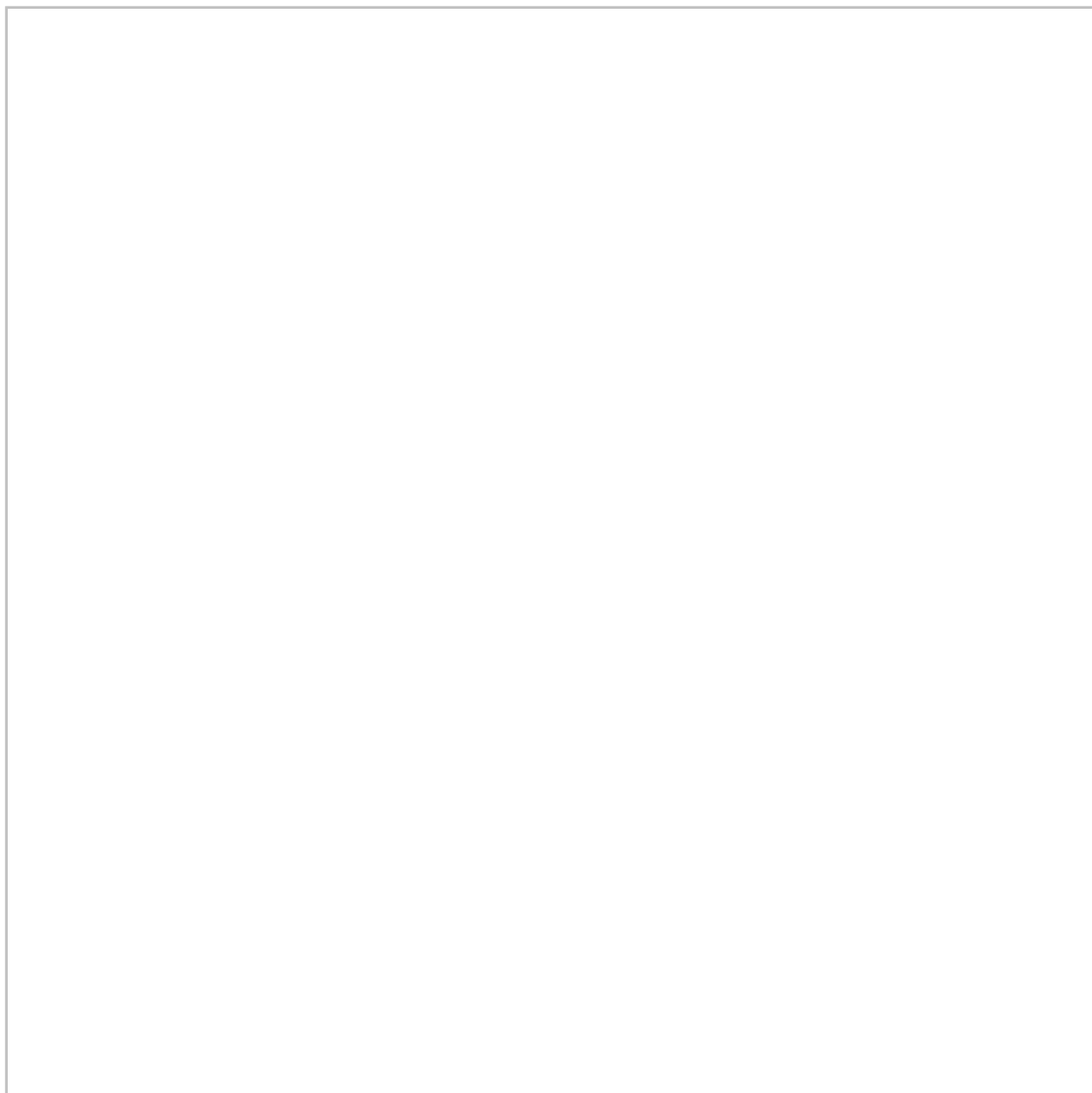
**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

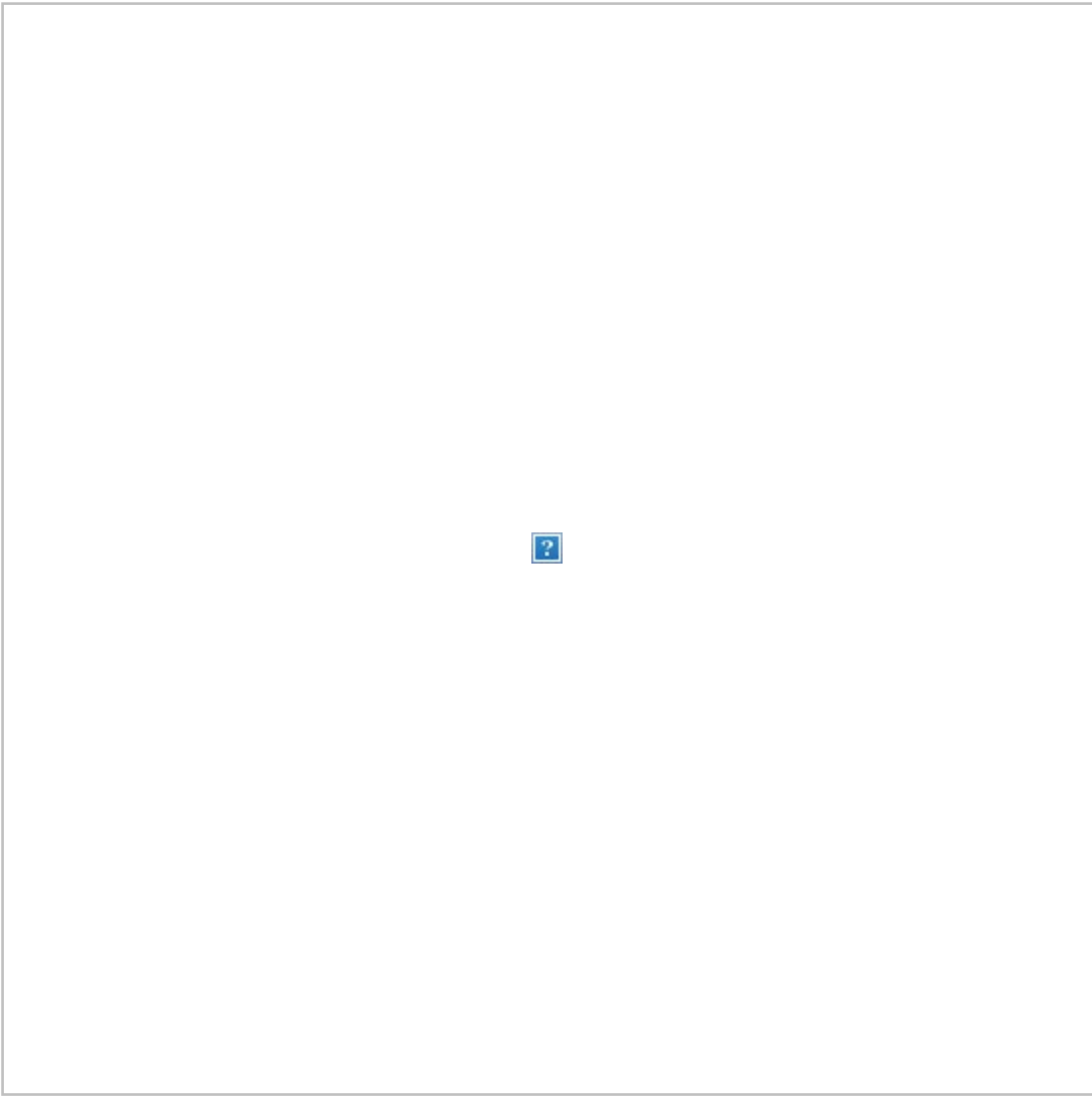
A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:



From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:



From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



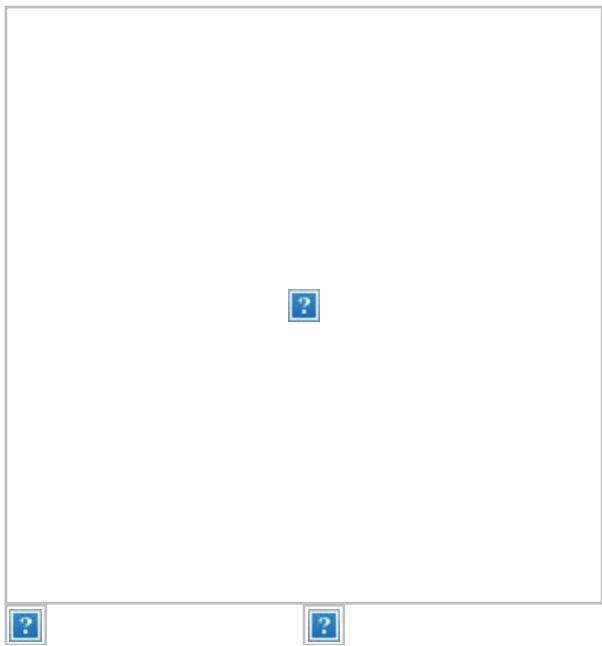
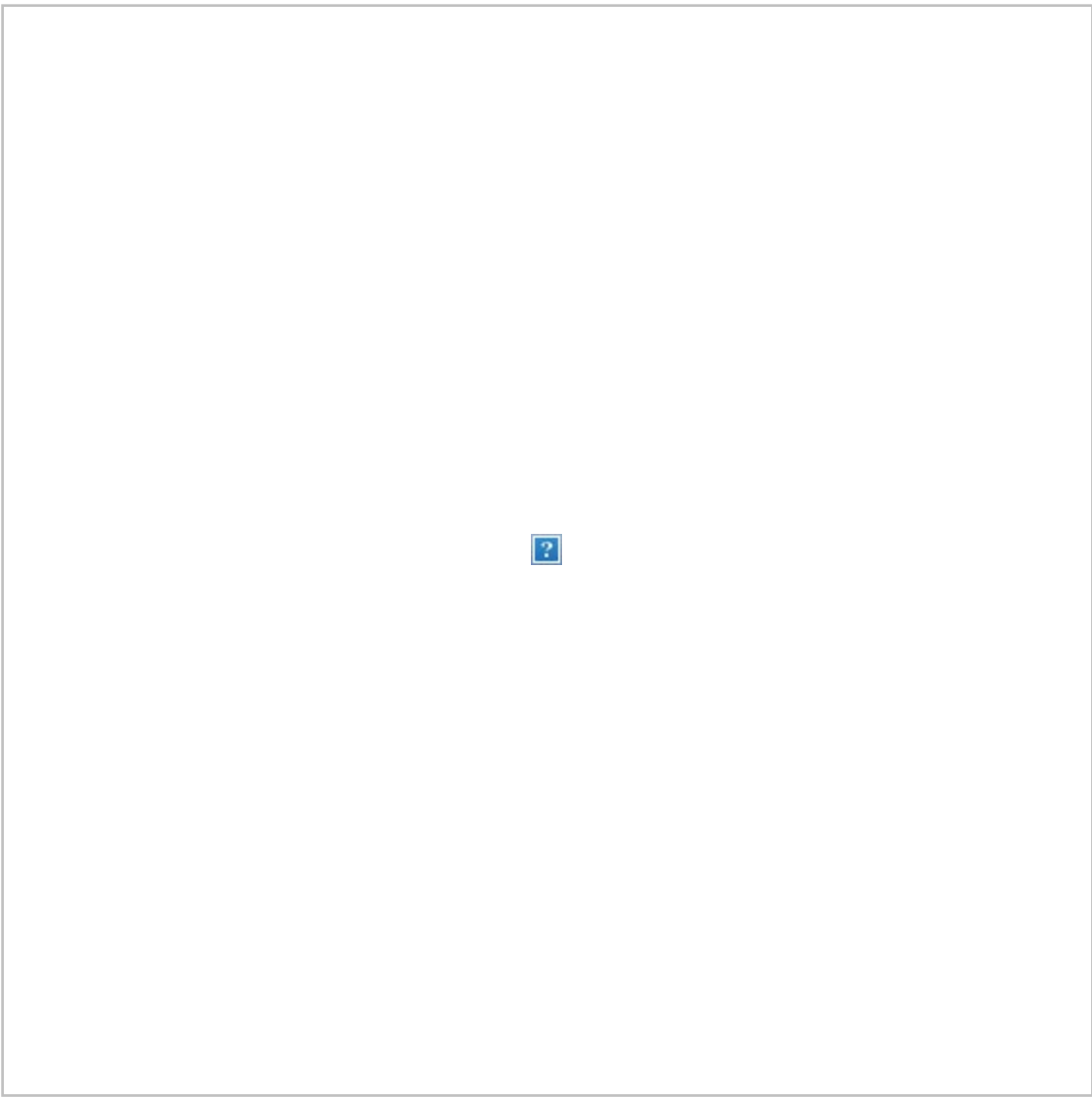
Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:



One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:



A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:



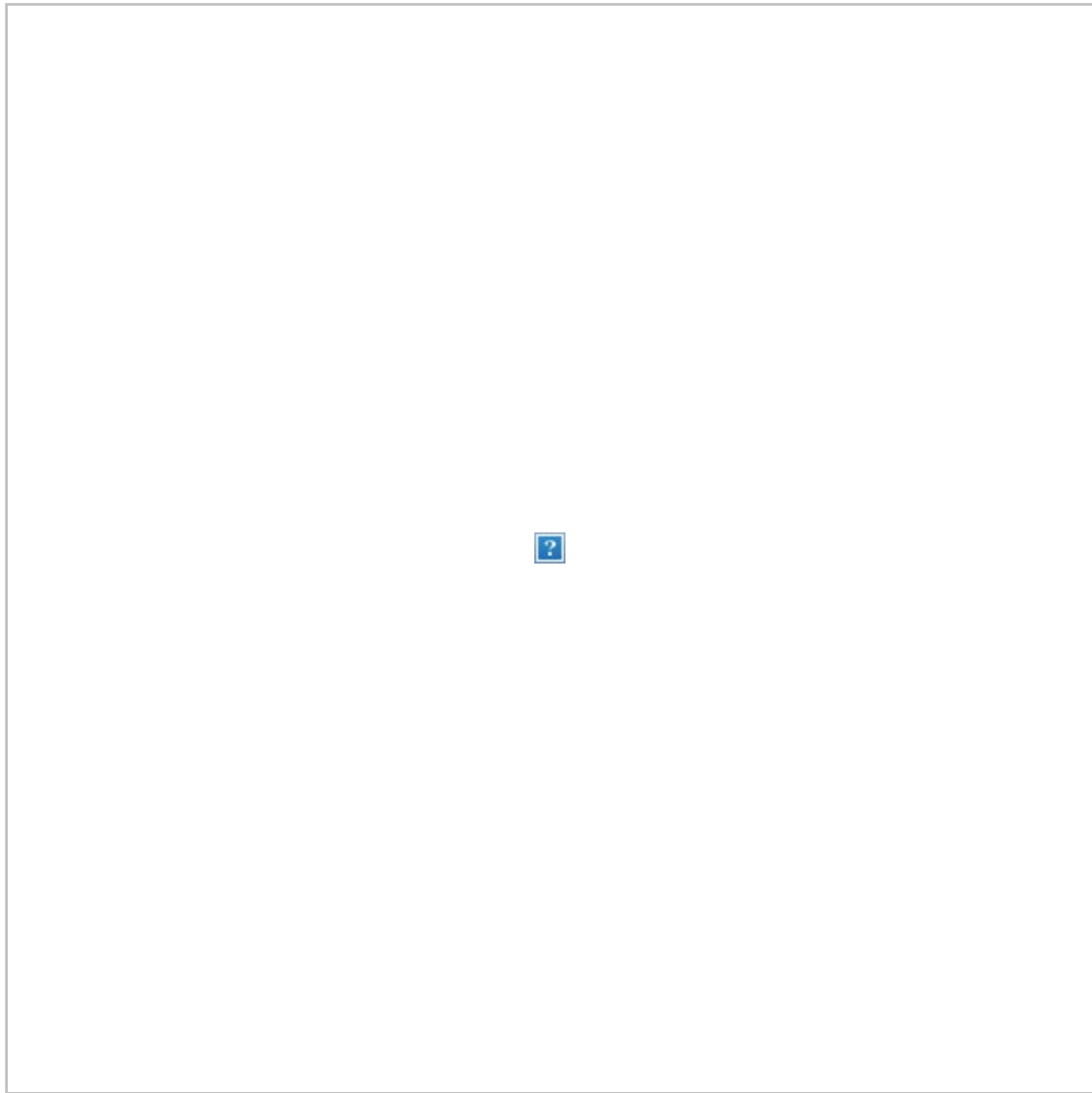


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

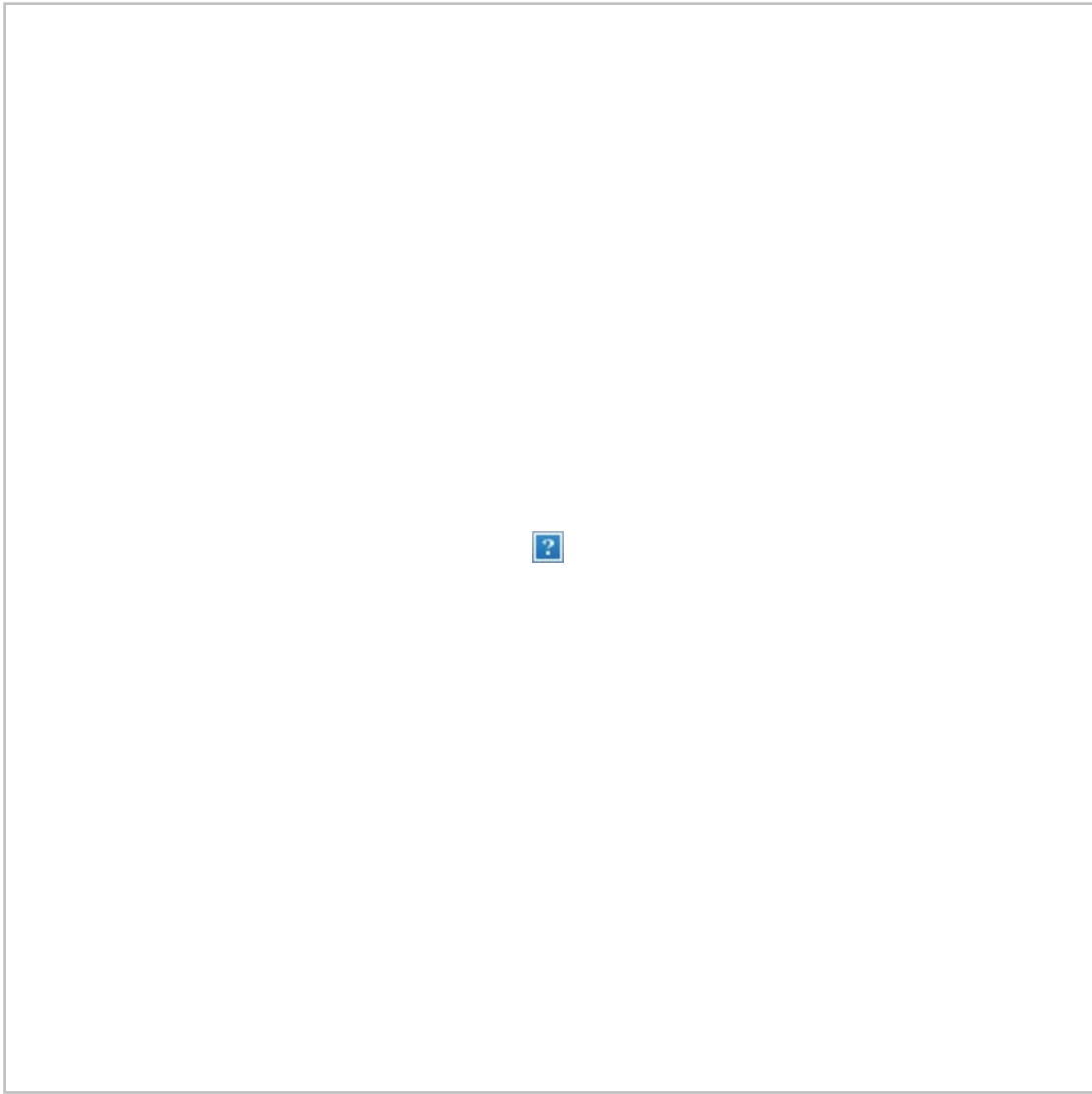


Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



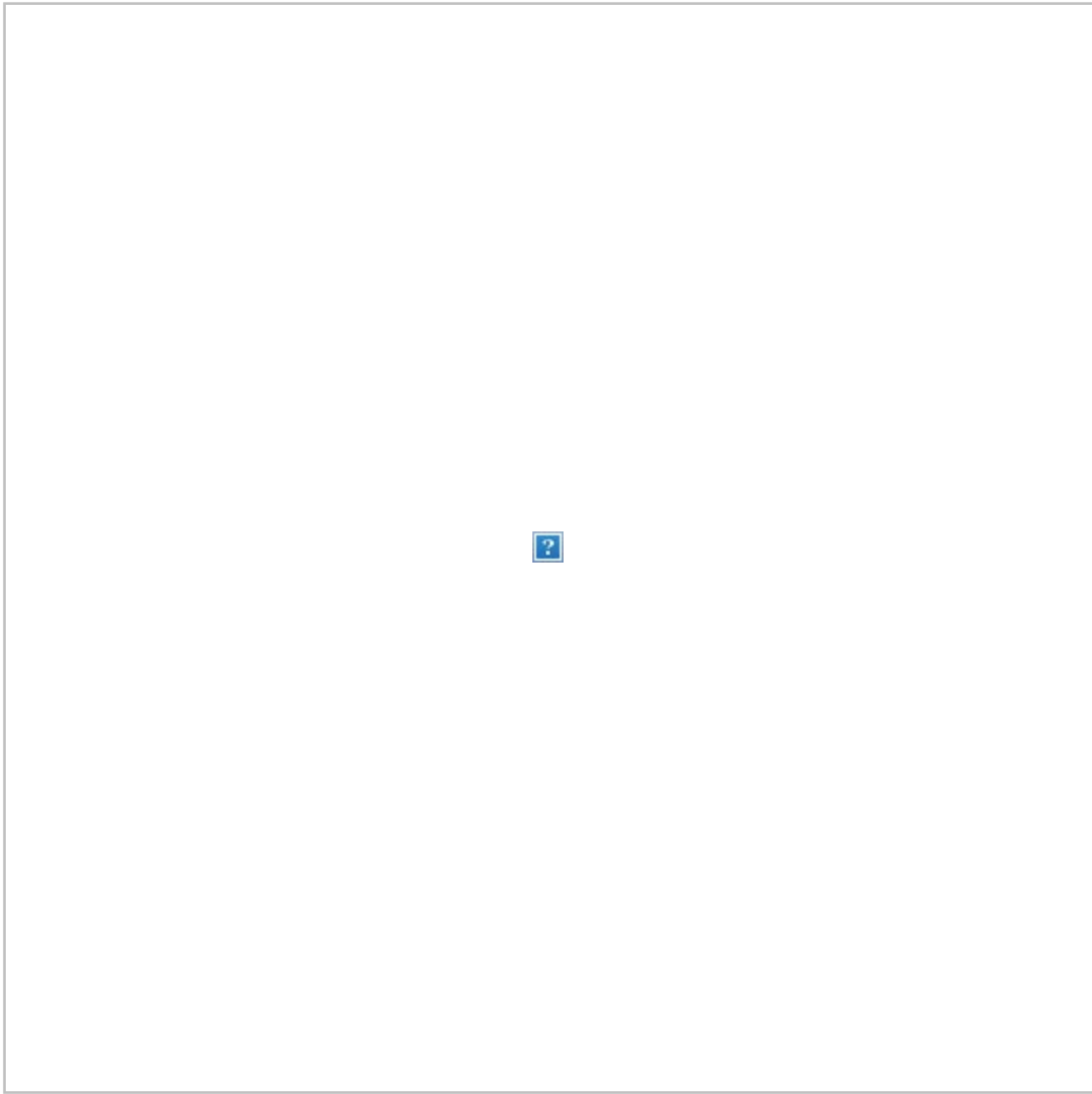
Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:



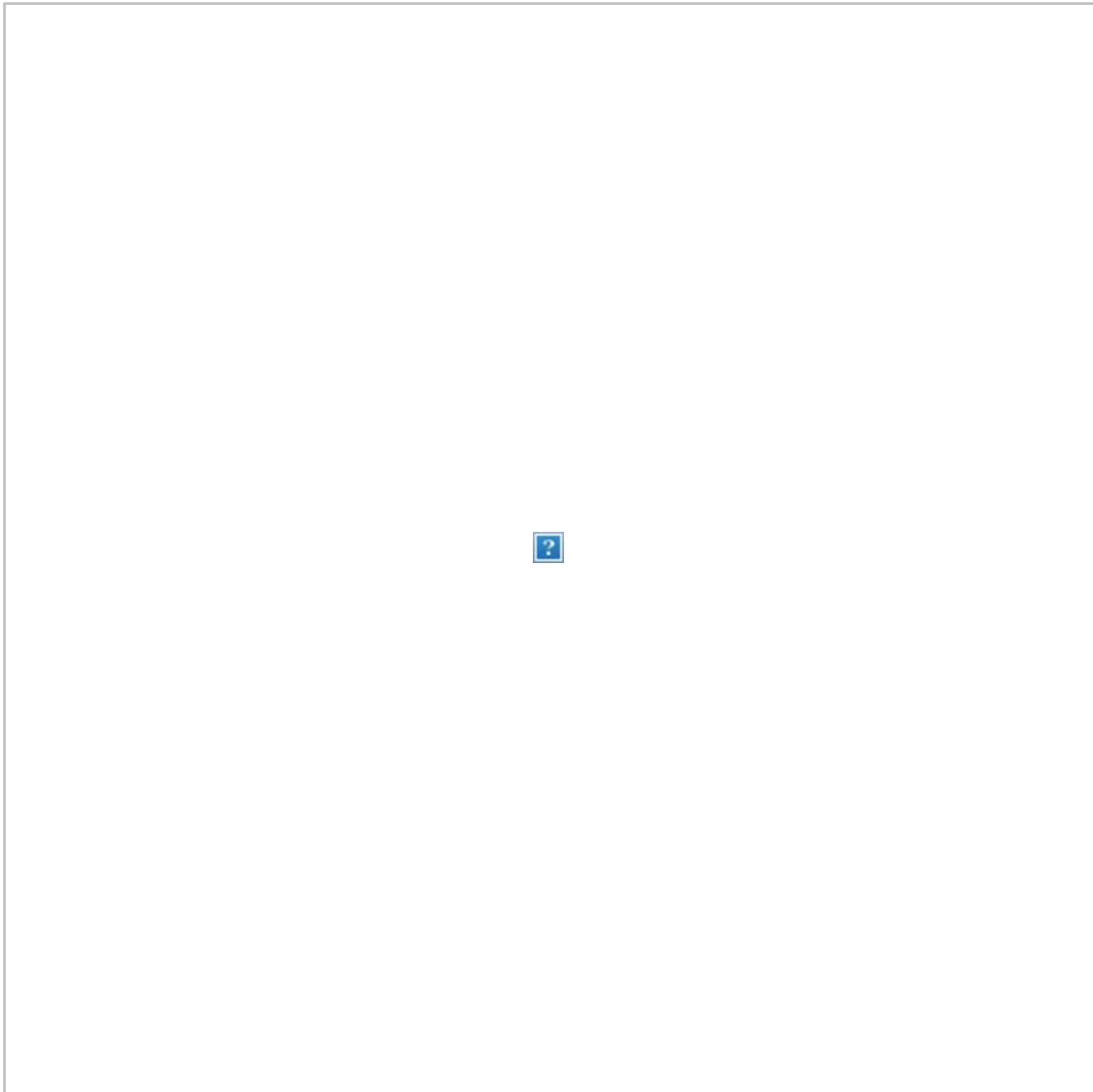
A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:



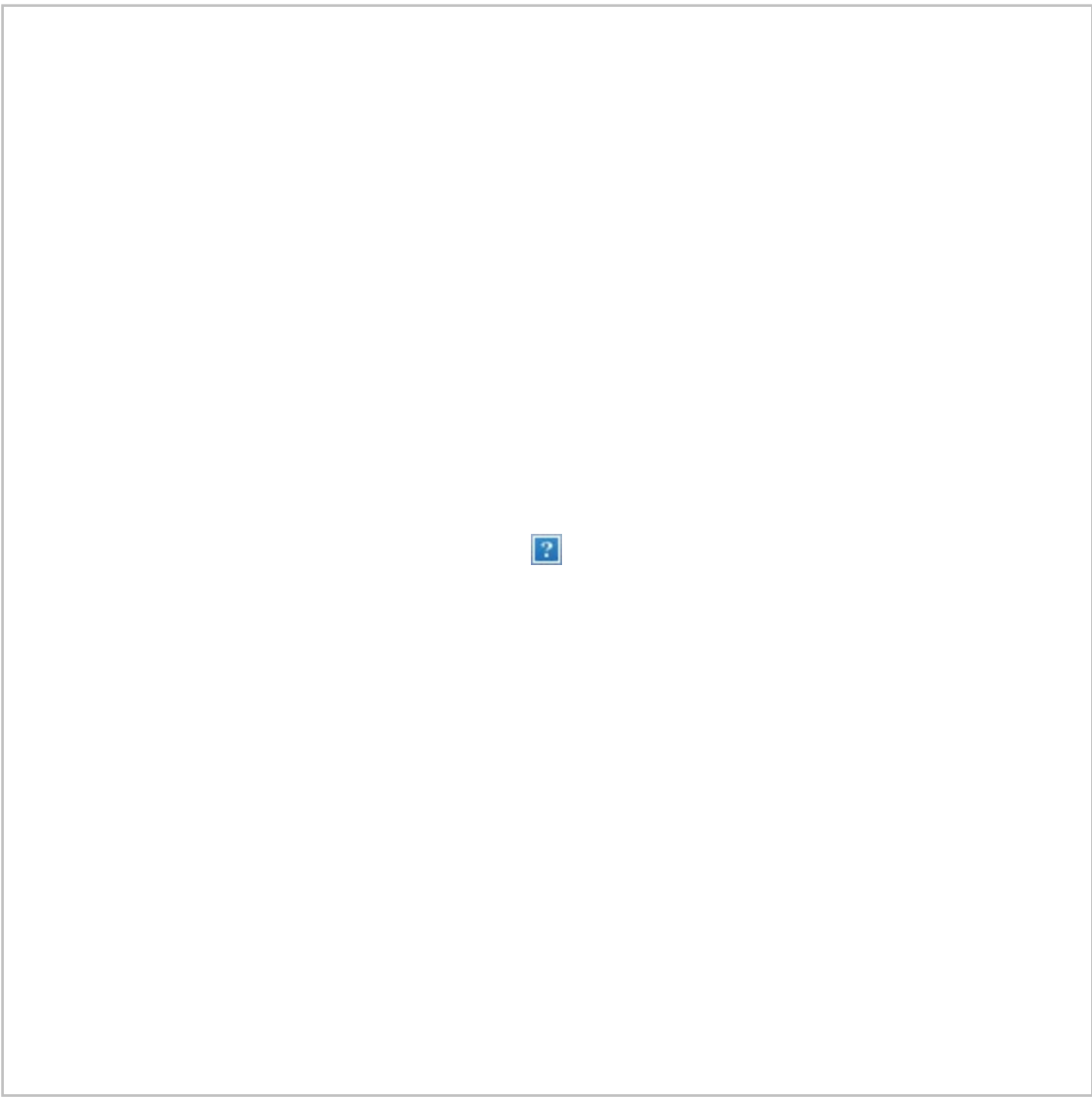
A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

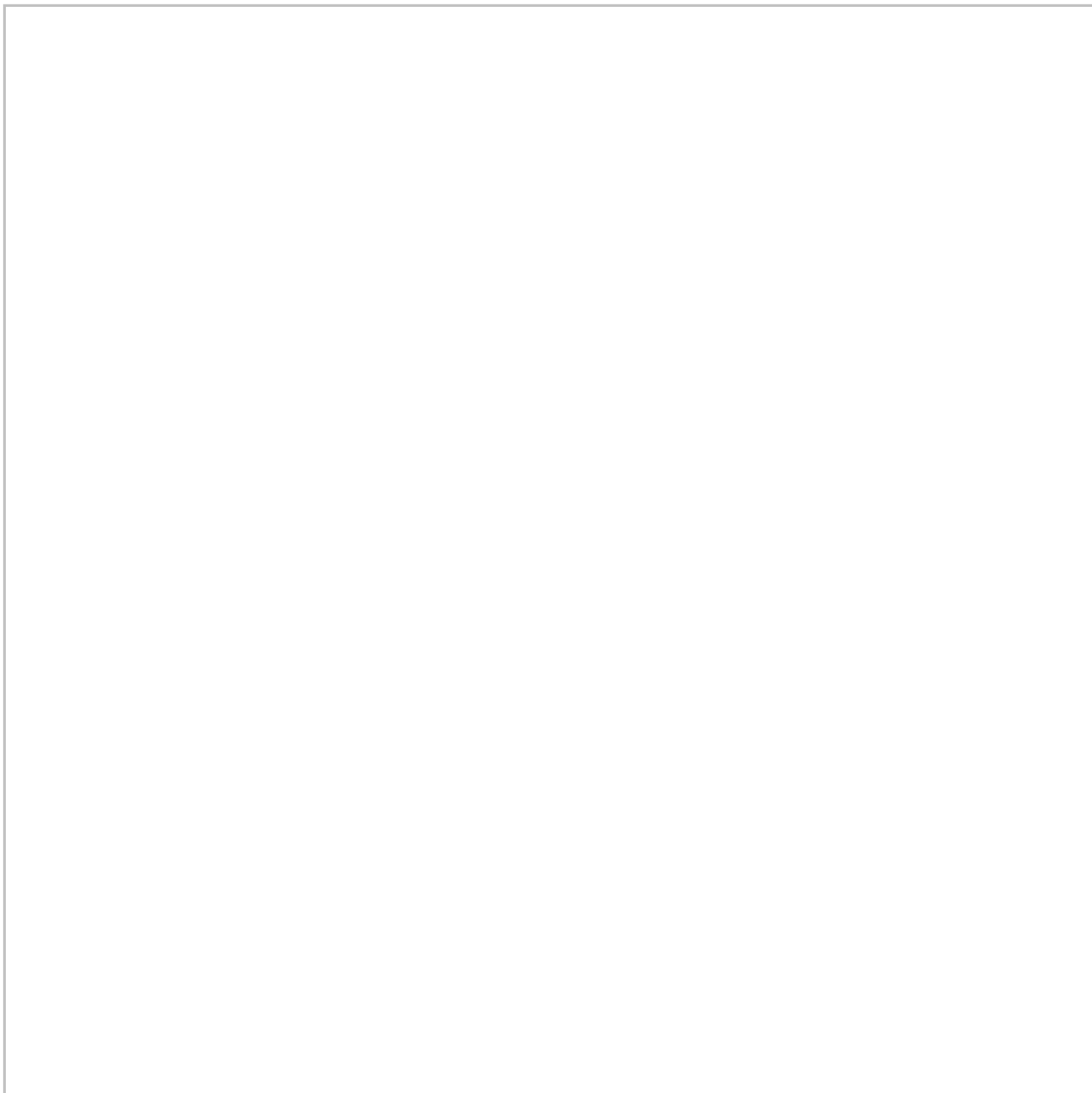


A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:



Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:



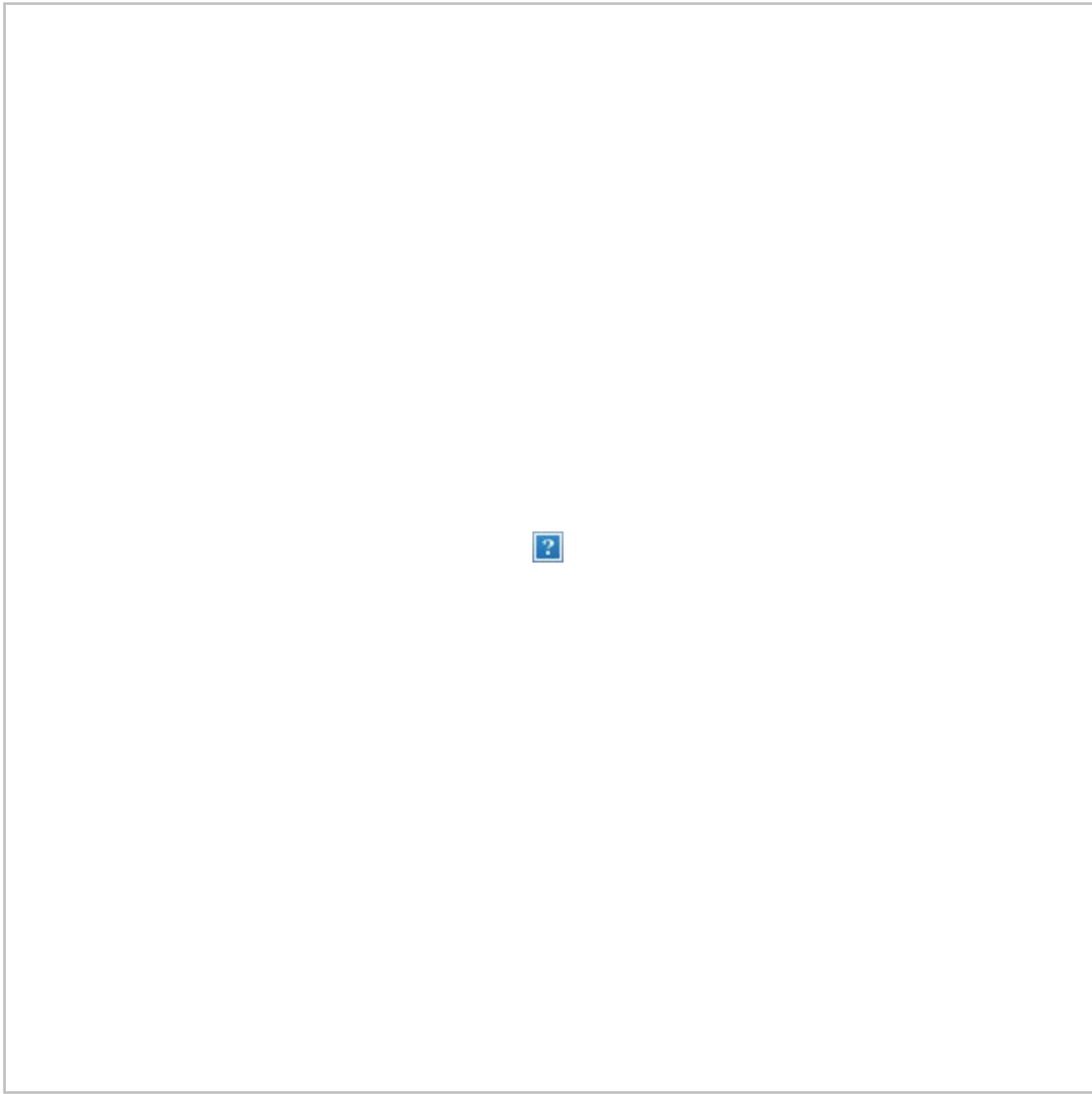


From a news writer for the journal Nature:

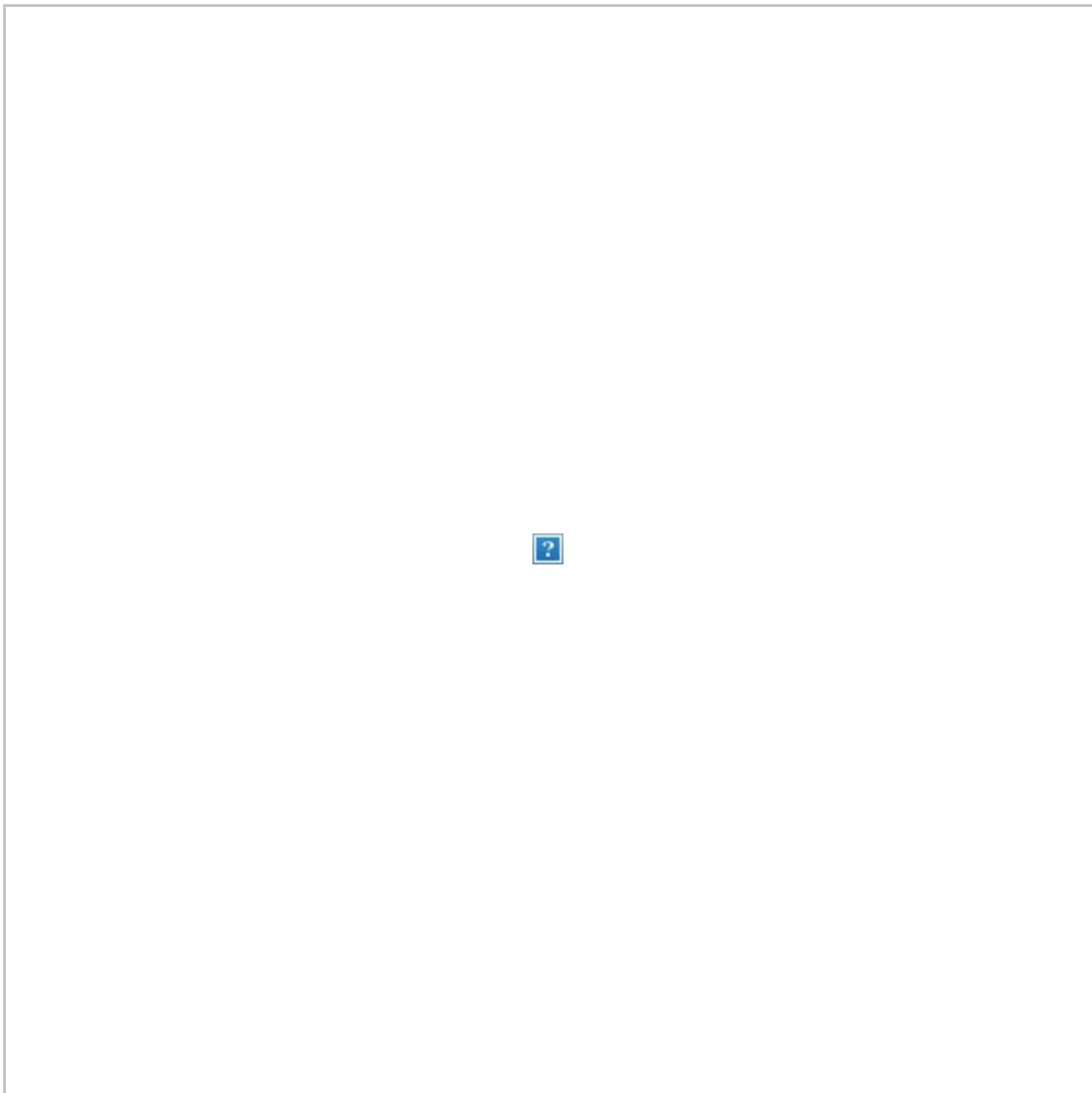




Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:



The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:



And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))



## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

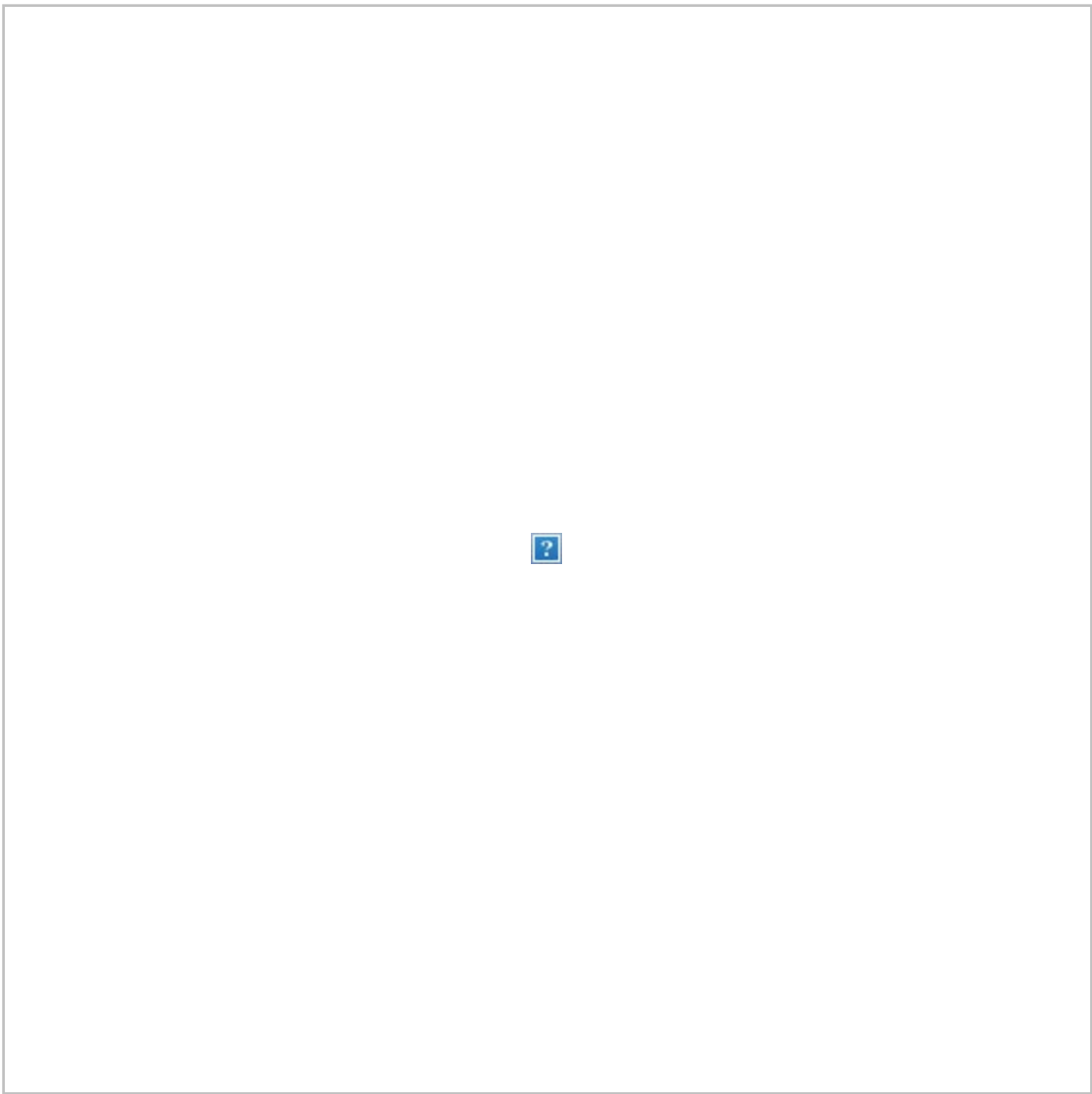
Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:



Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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The Daily 202: James Comey says he's more worried about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

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Friday, April 12, 2019 11:14:31 AM

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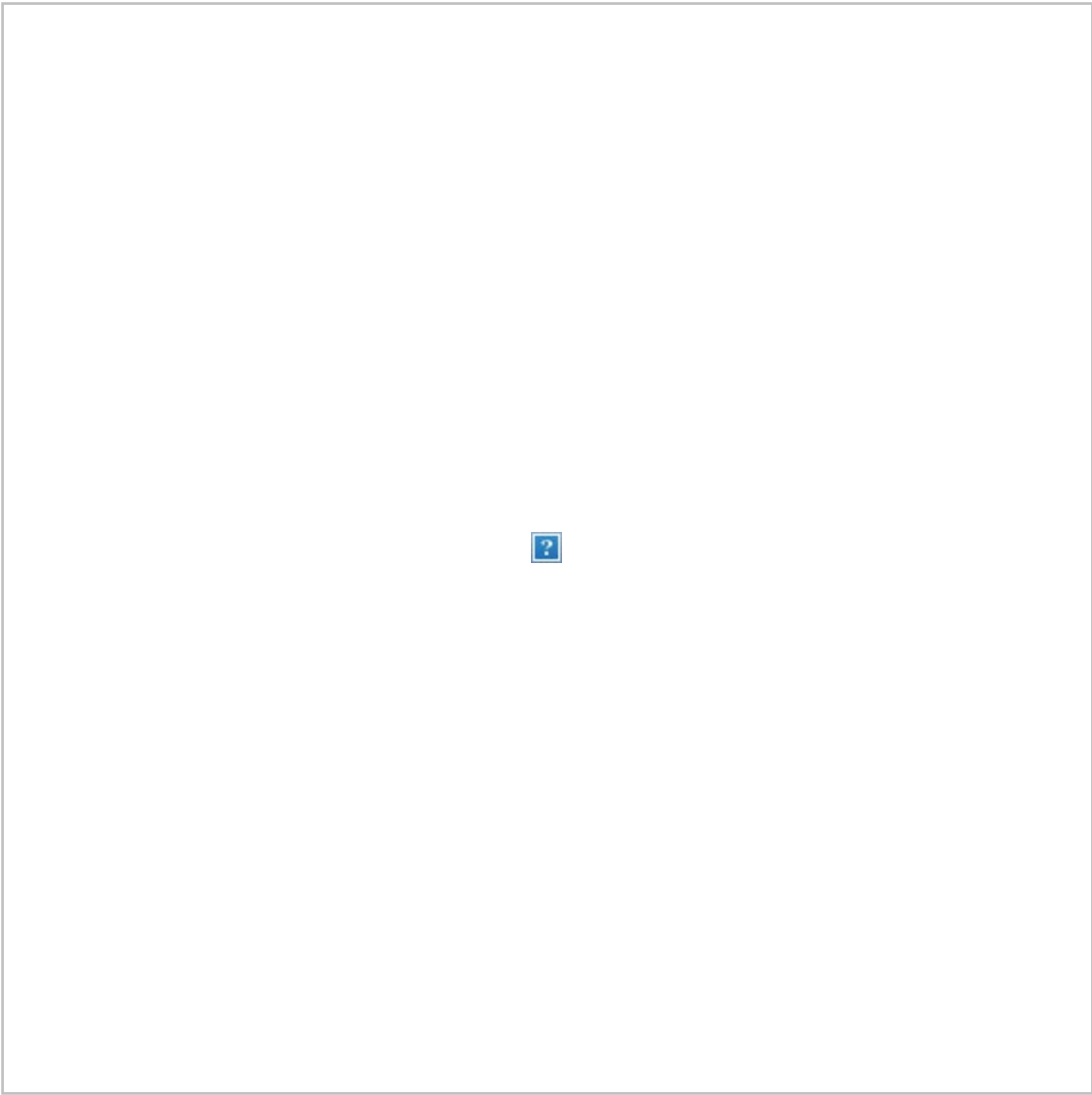
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 Listen to The Big Idea



## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social



media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

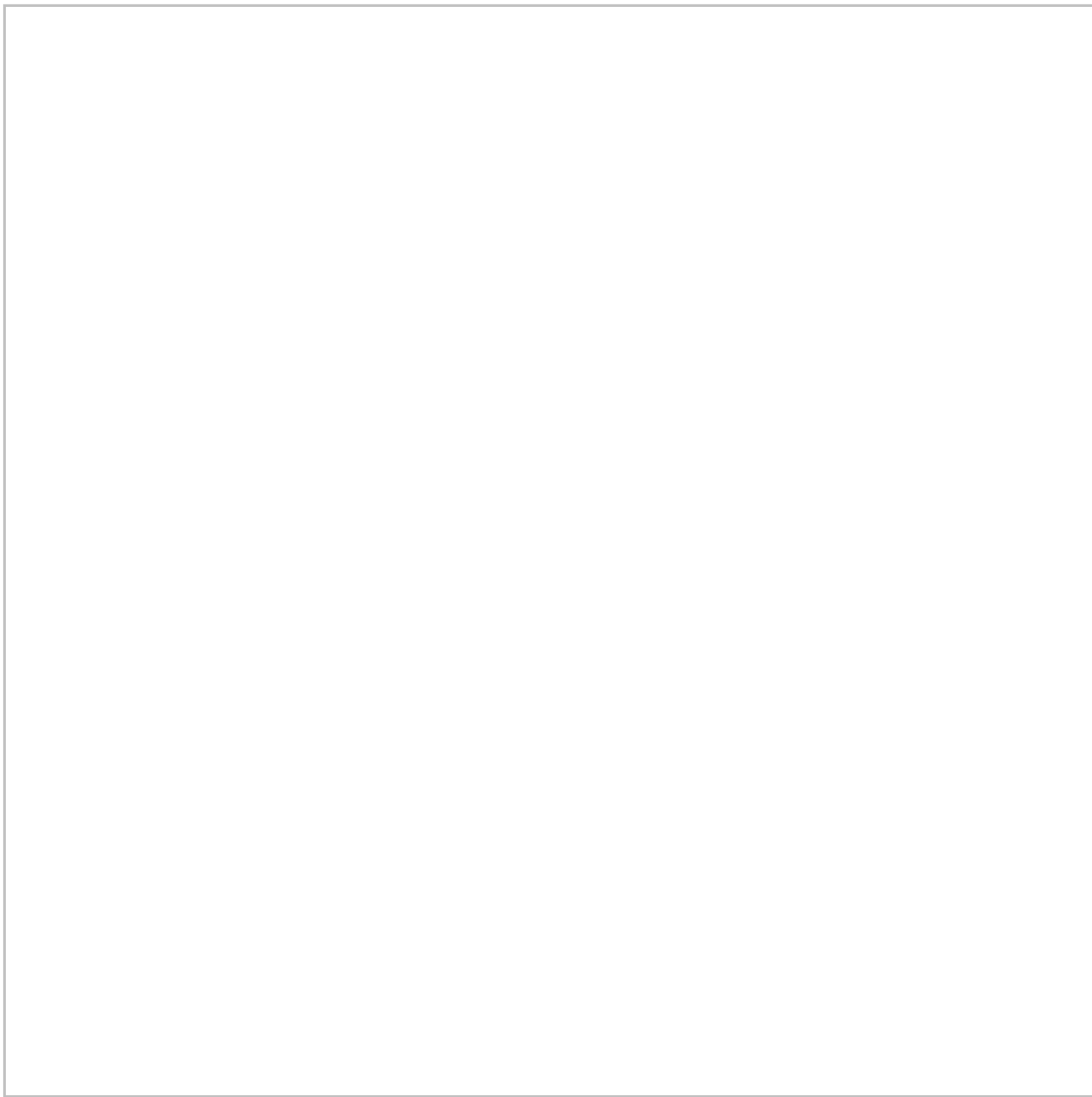
**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."



Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”



Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

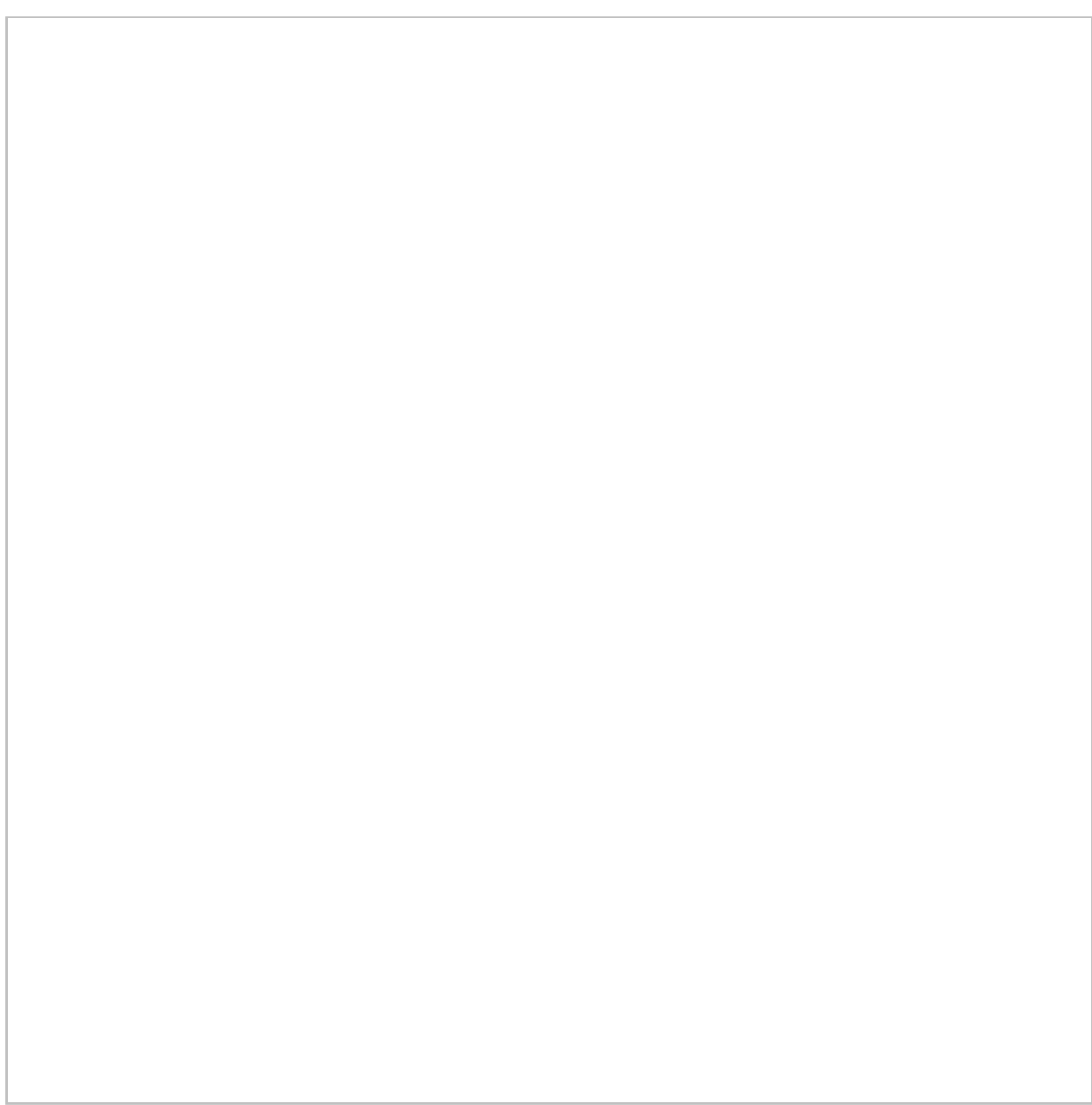
**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**



**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”



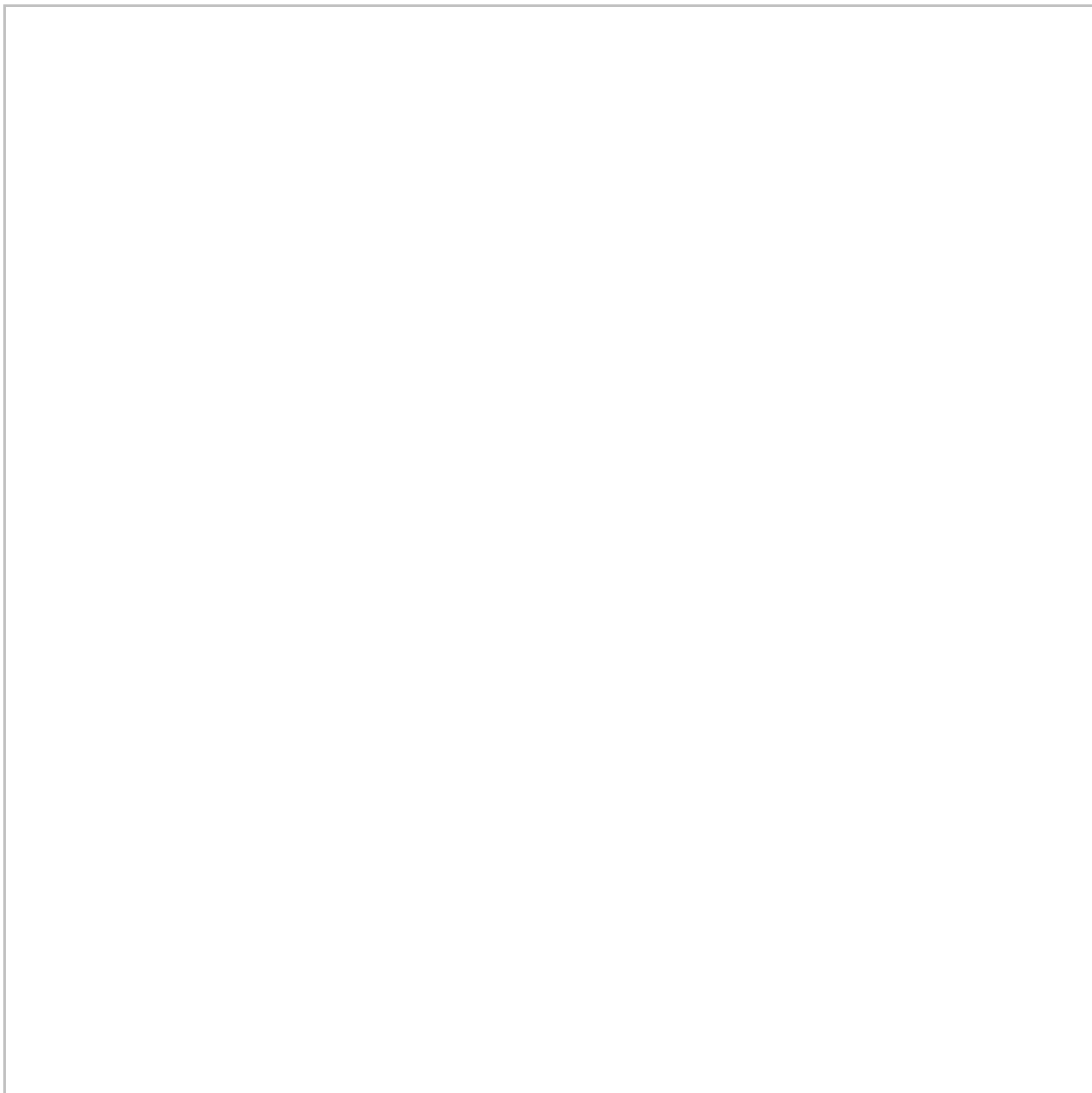
William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."



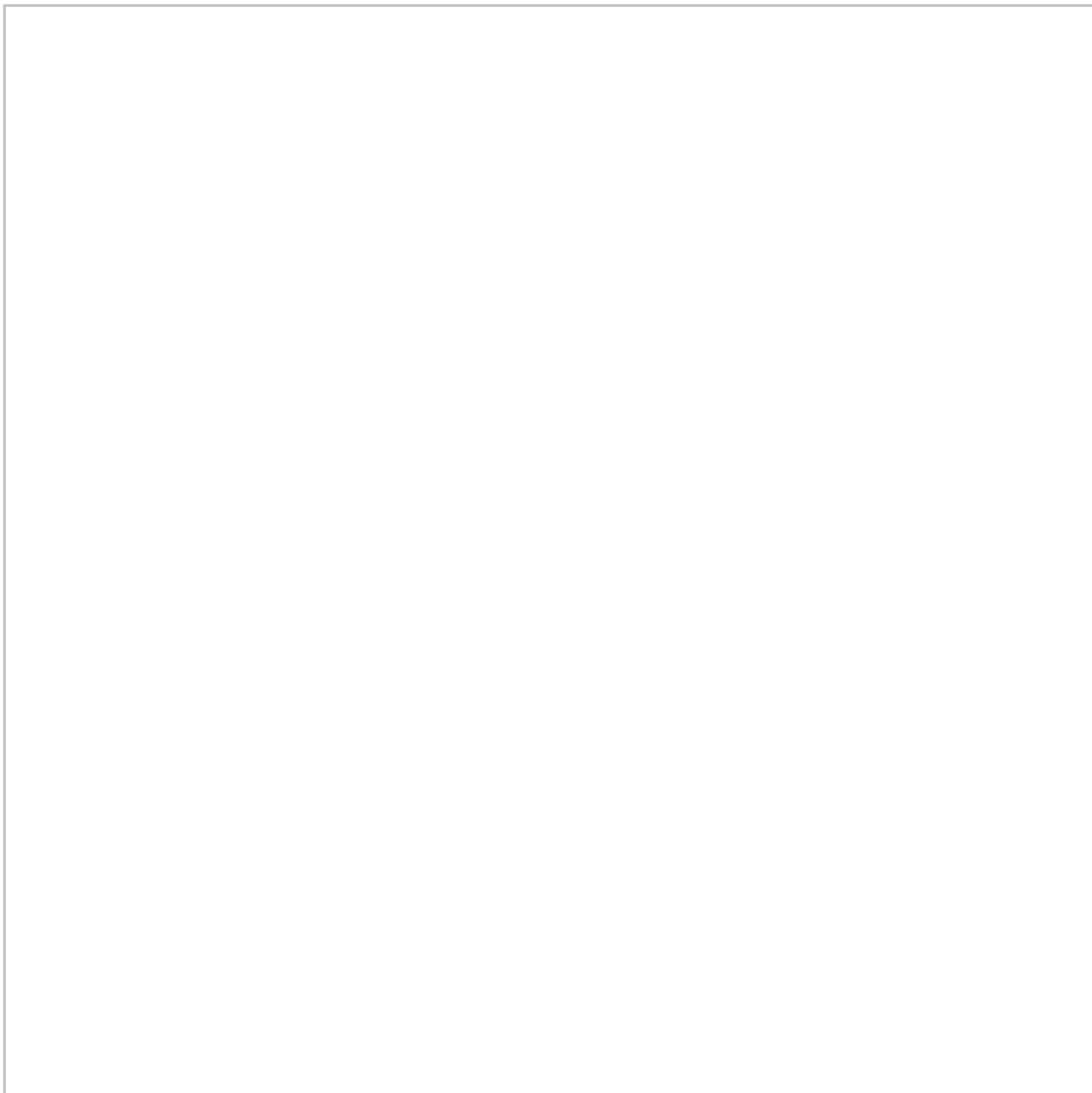
Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.





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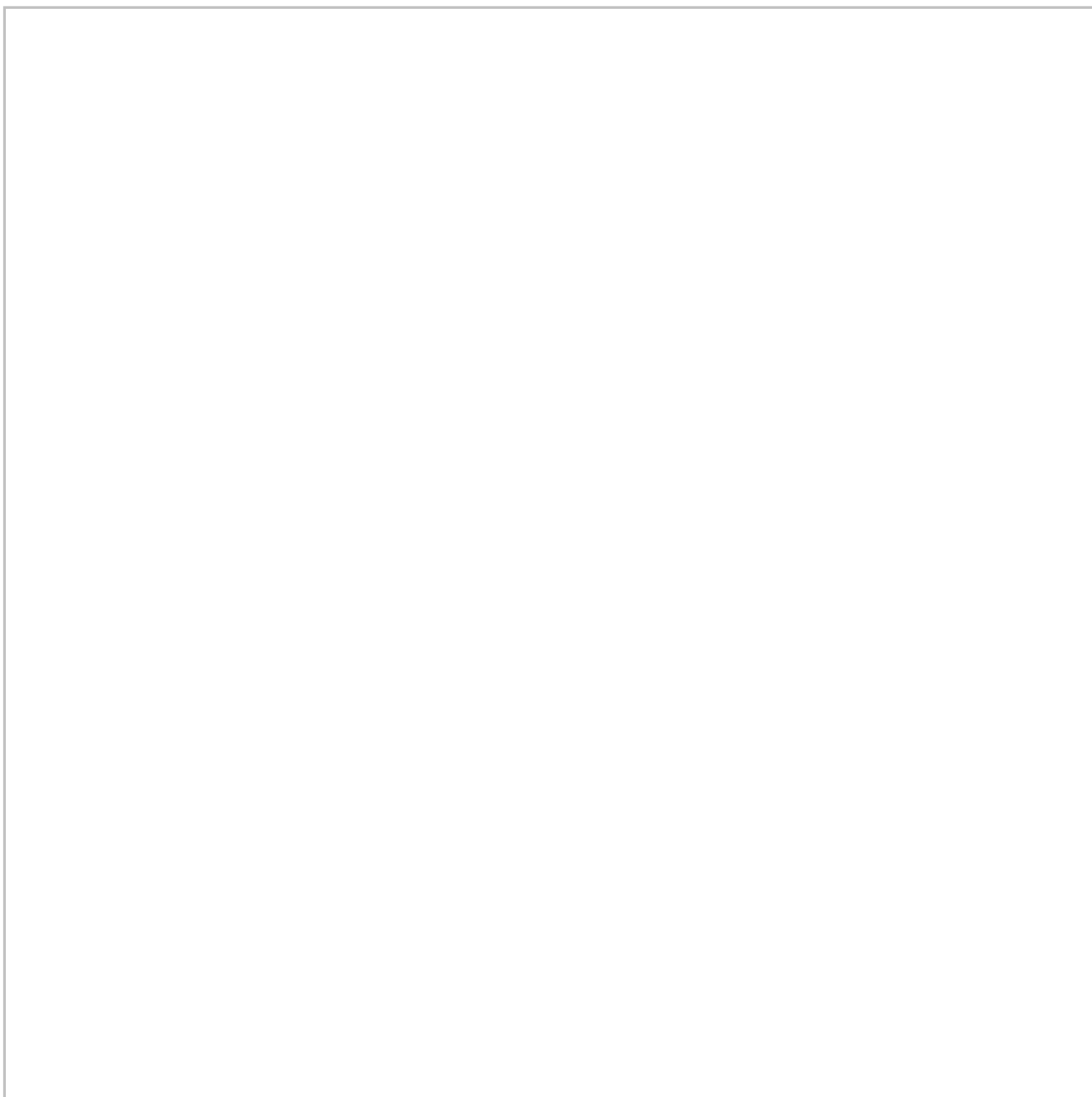
**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."

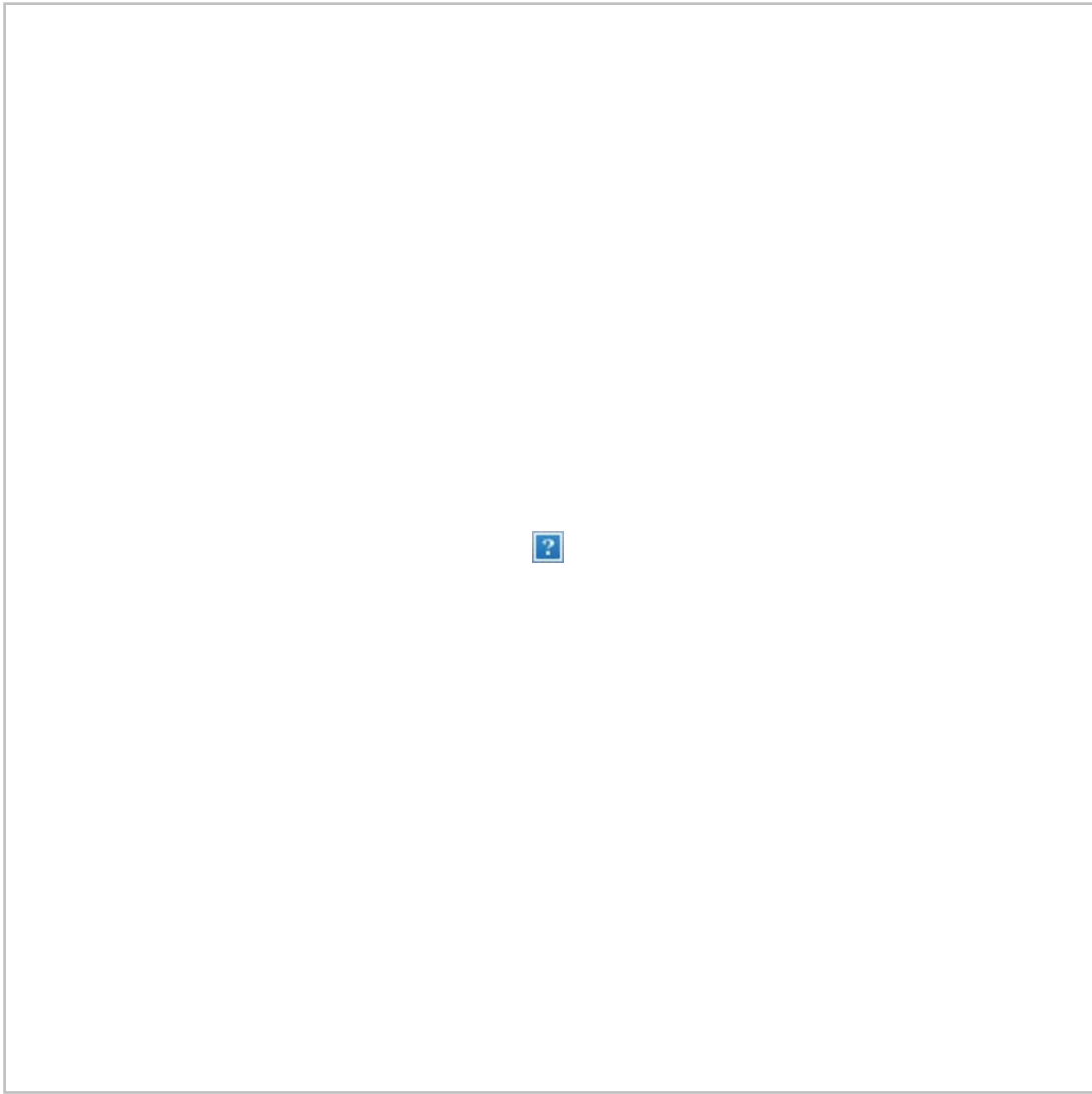


Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

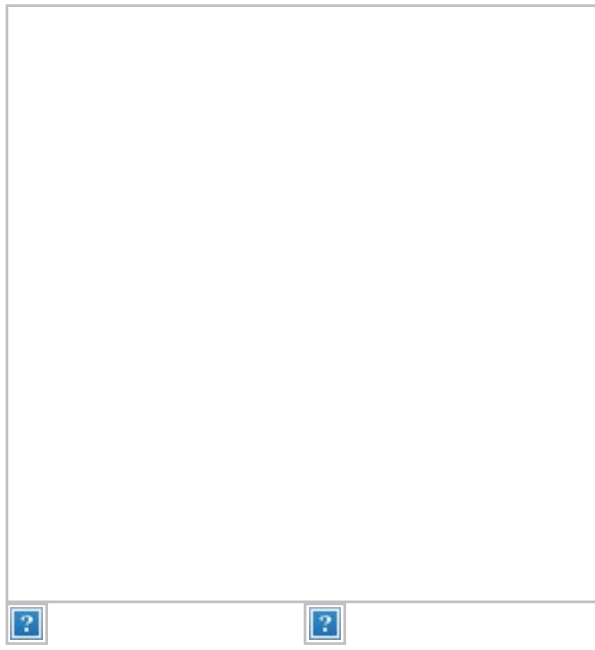
-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."



NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)



### GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**



**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC



tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation. [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#):** "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients. [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#):** "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will 'fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.' **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**"

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who's accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he "really" misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel's Anthony Man reports](#): "'The worst part of this is being broke,' he said. ... 'I've lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I'm not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.'"

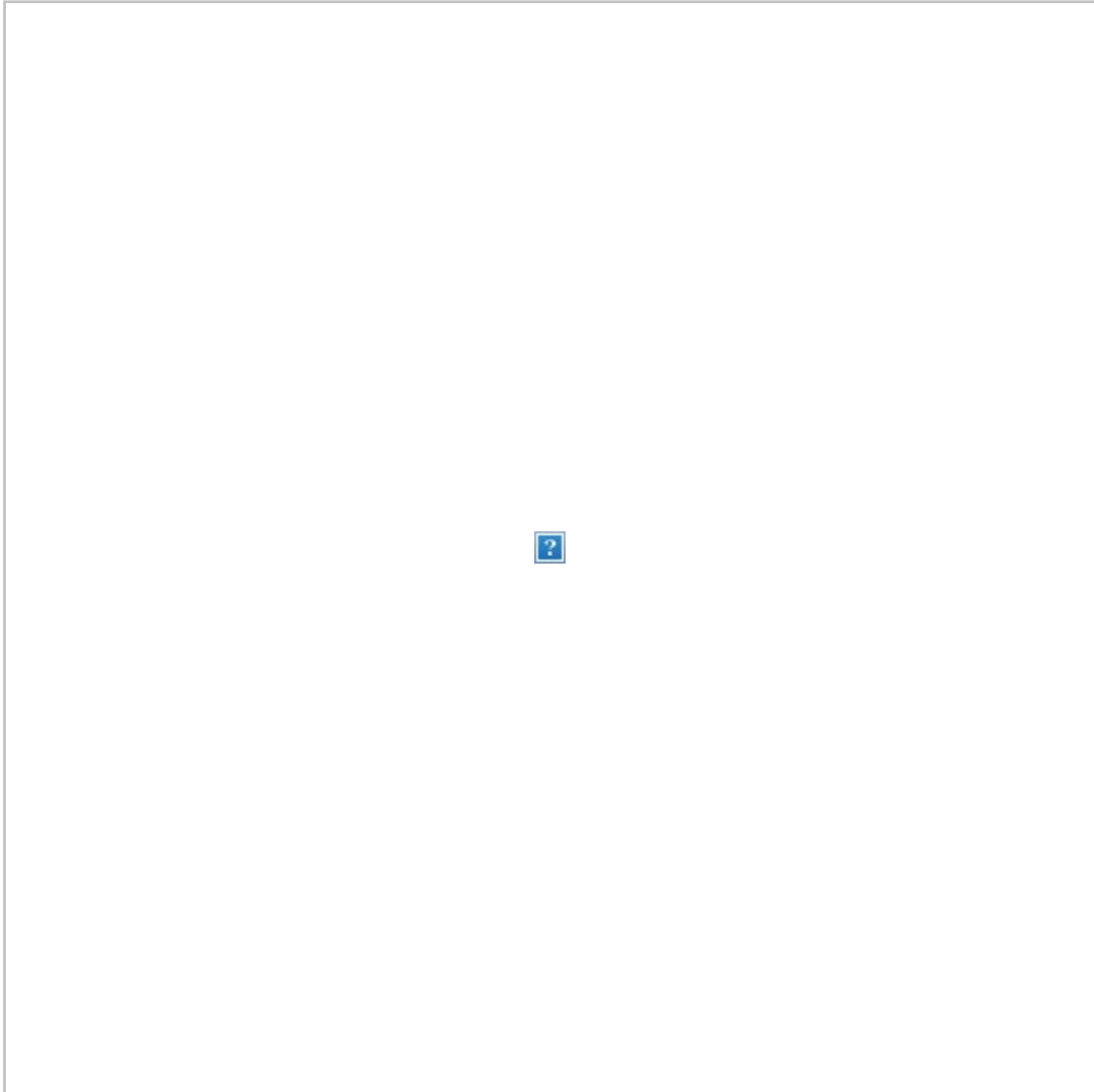
**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

"While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

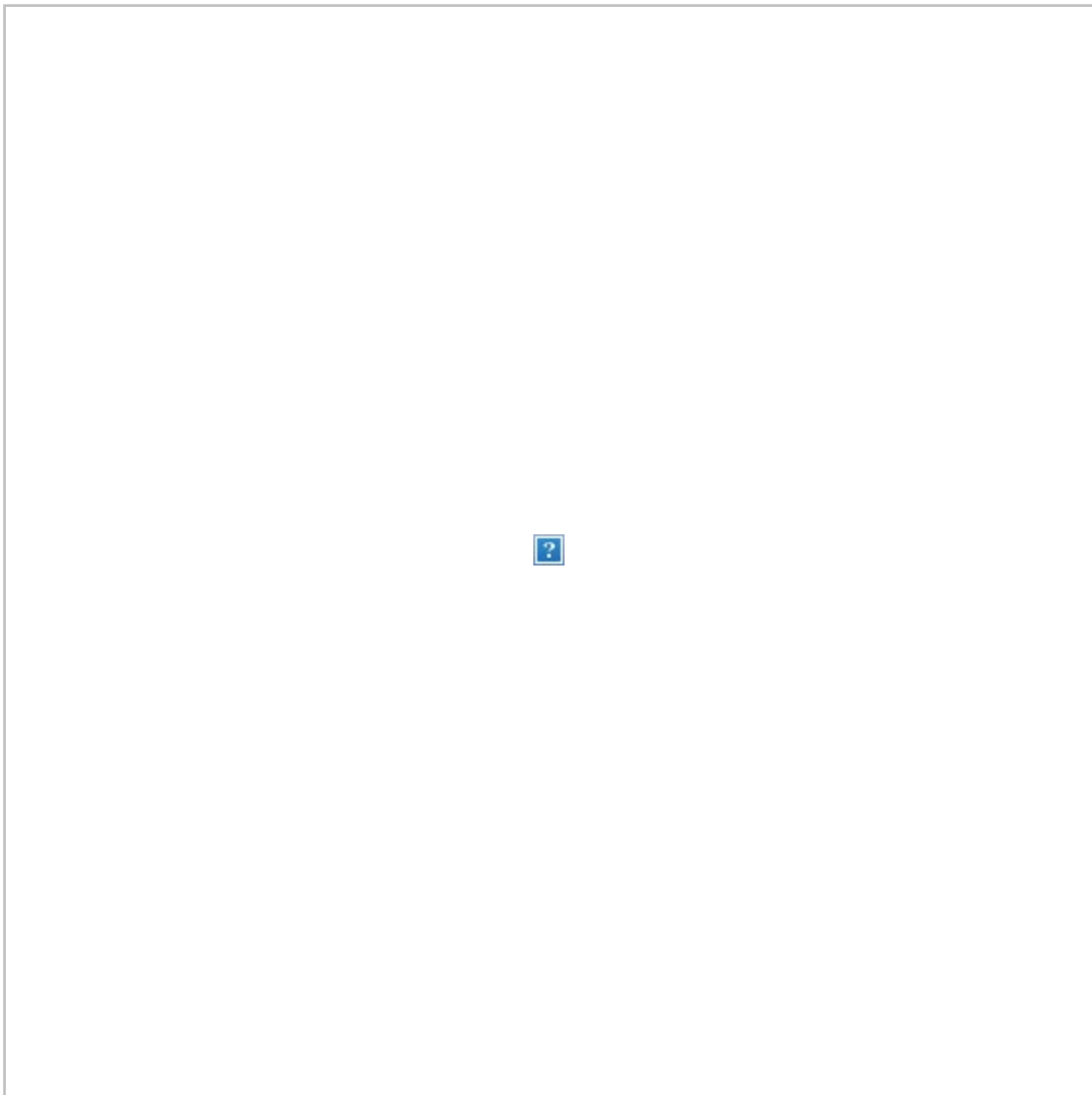
**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:



-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

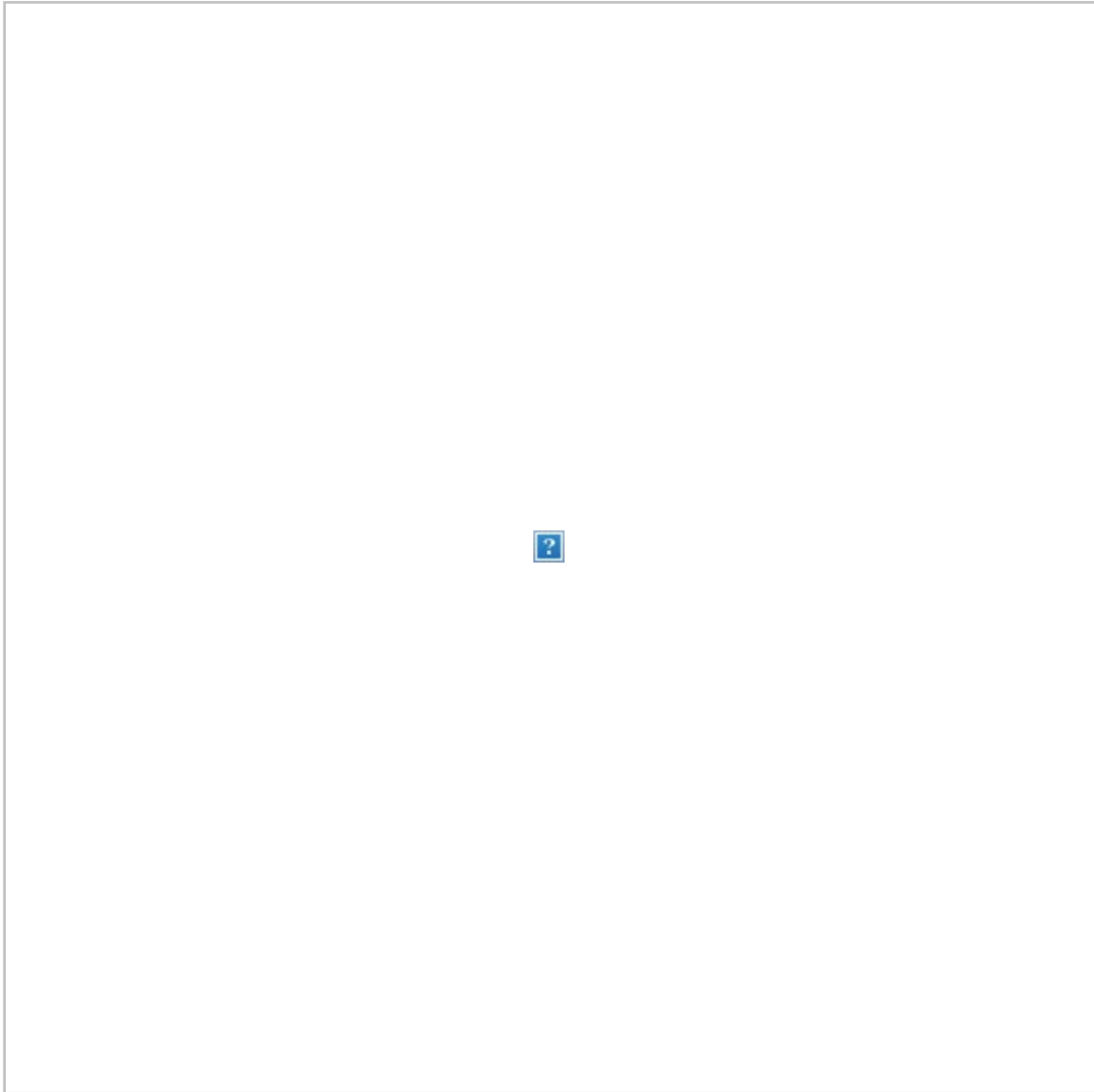
[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin. [Pamela Constable reports](#):** "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free



markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill. [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#):** "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia. [Eli Rosenberg reports](#):** "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

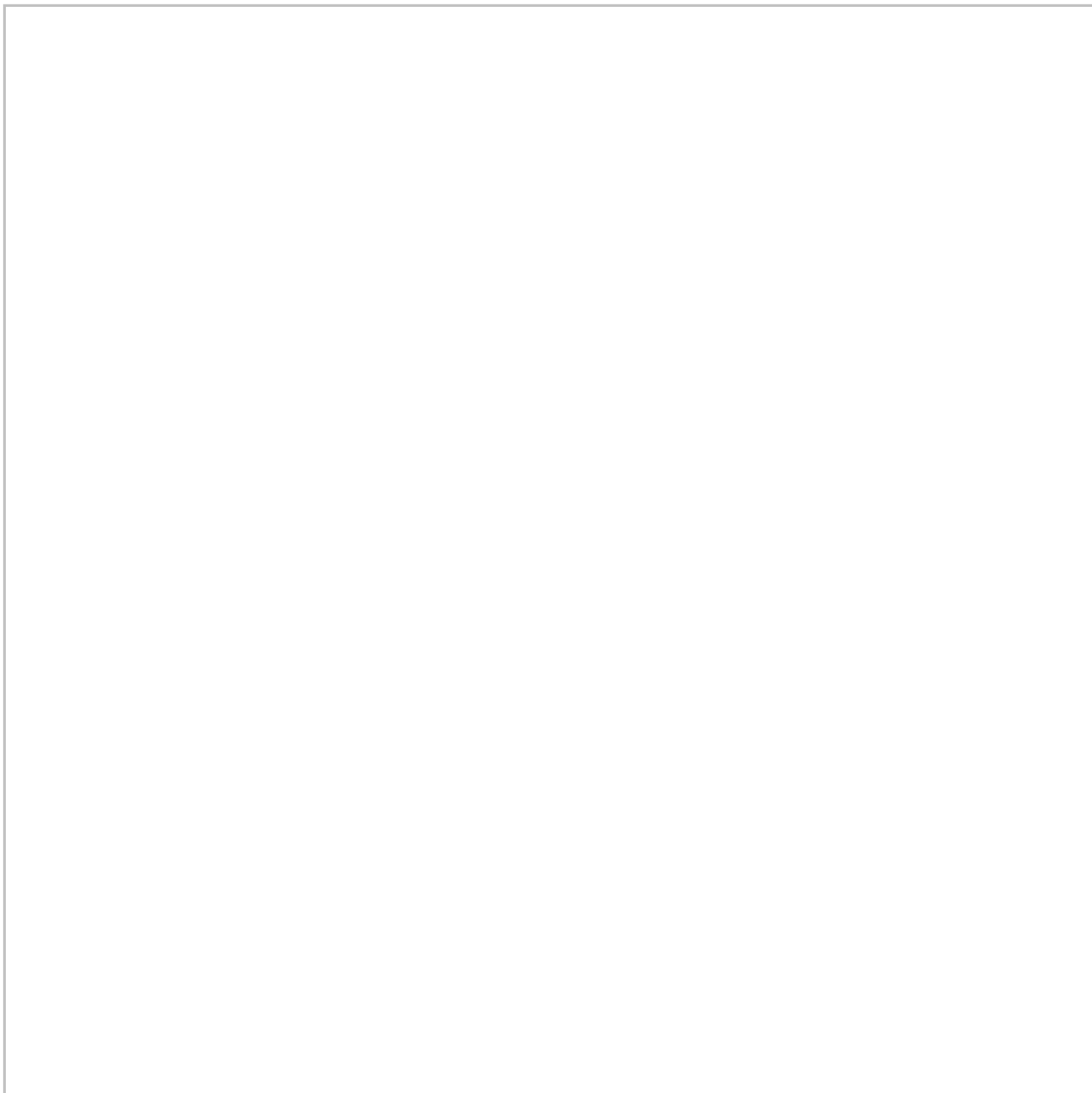
**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:

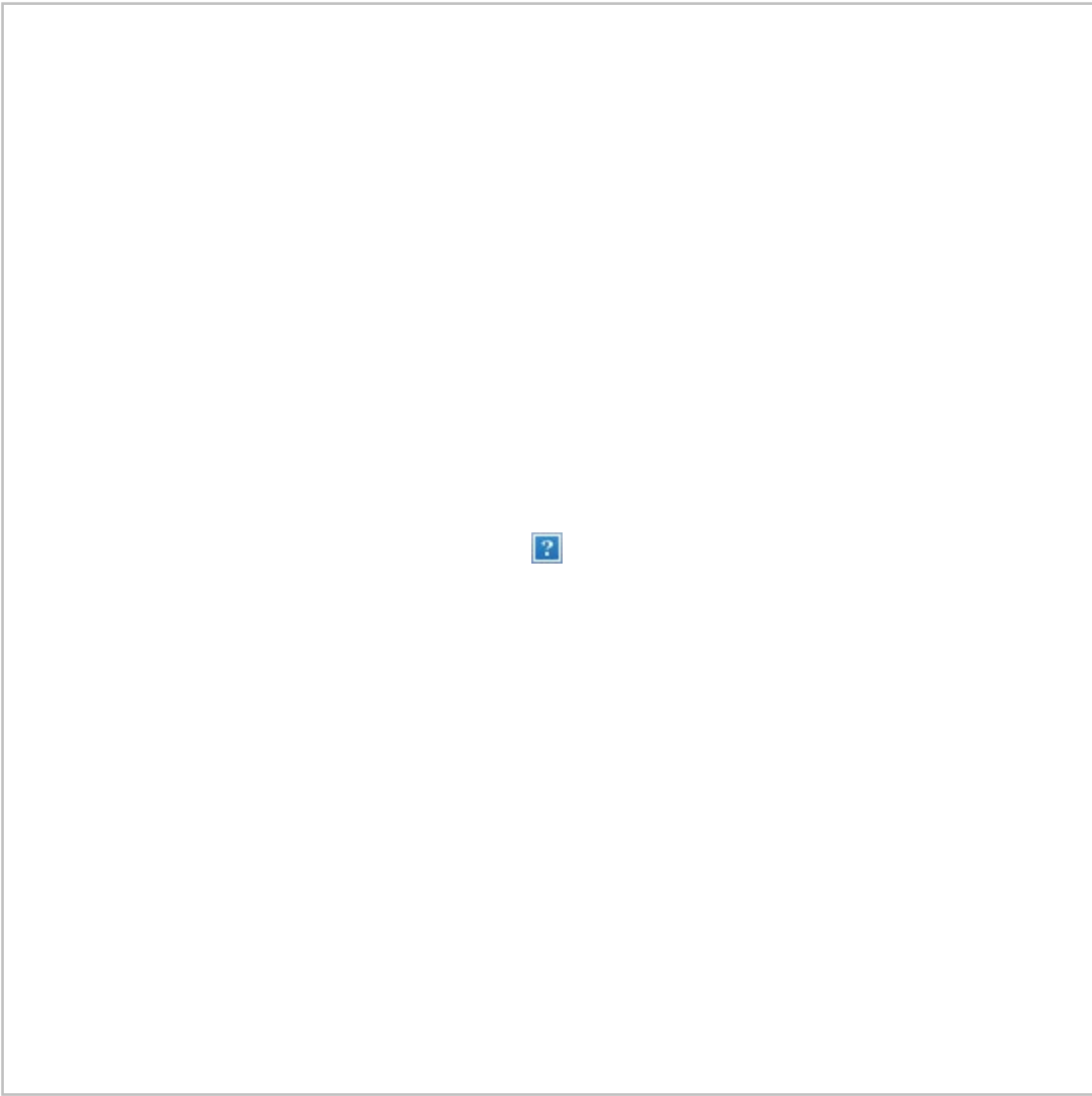


From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:





From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



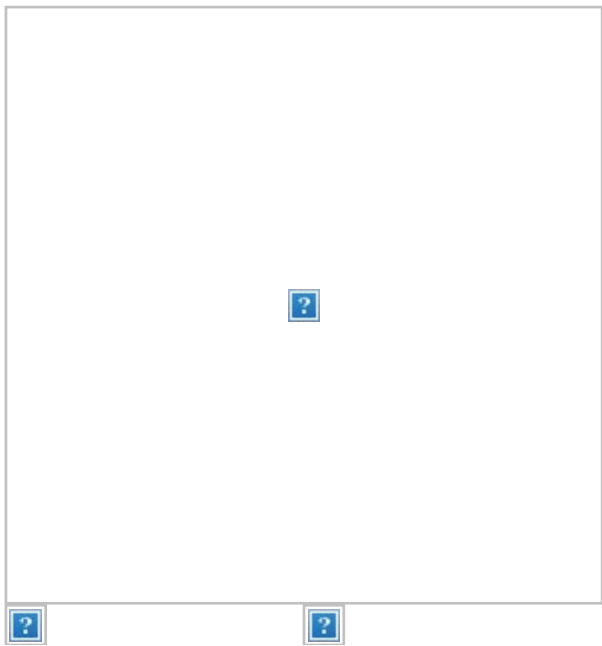
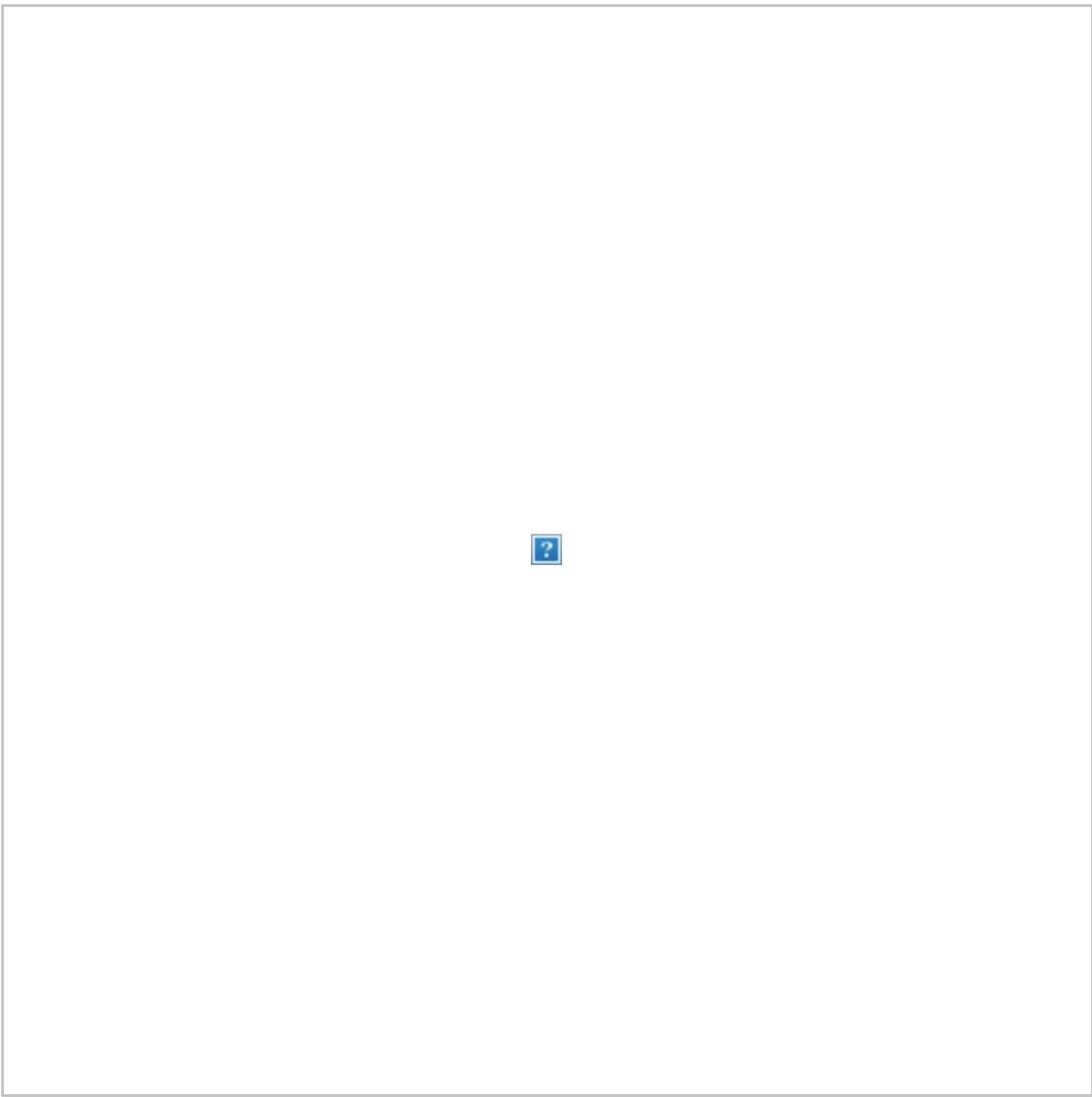
Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:



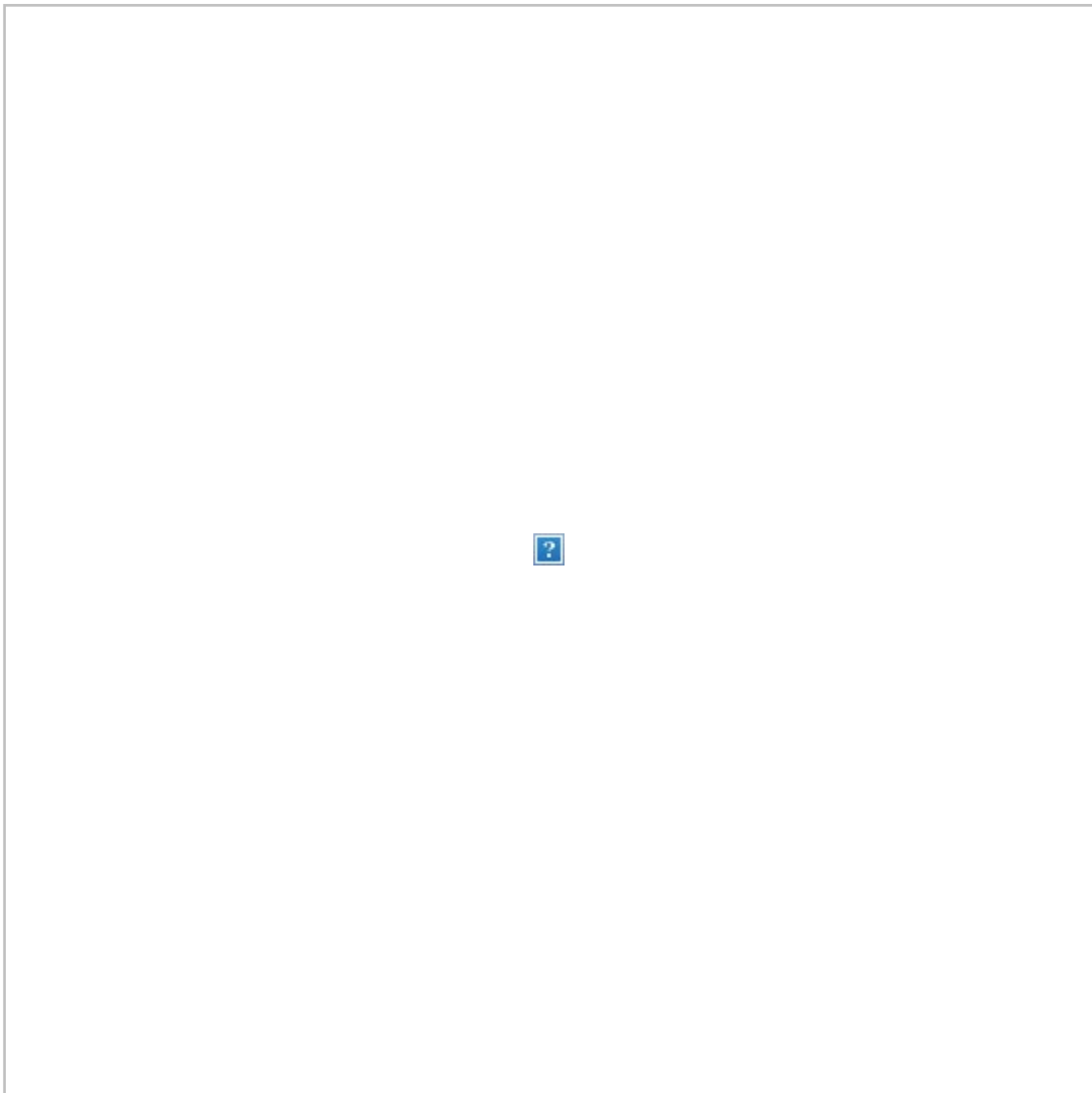
One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:



A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:

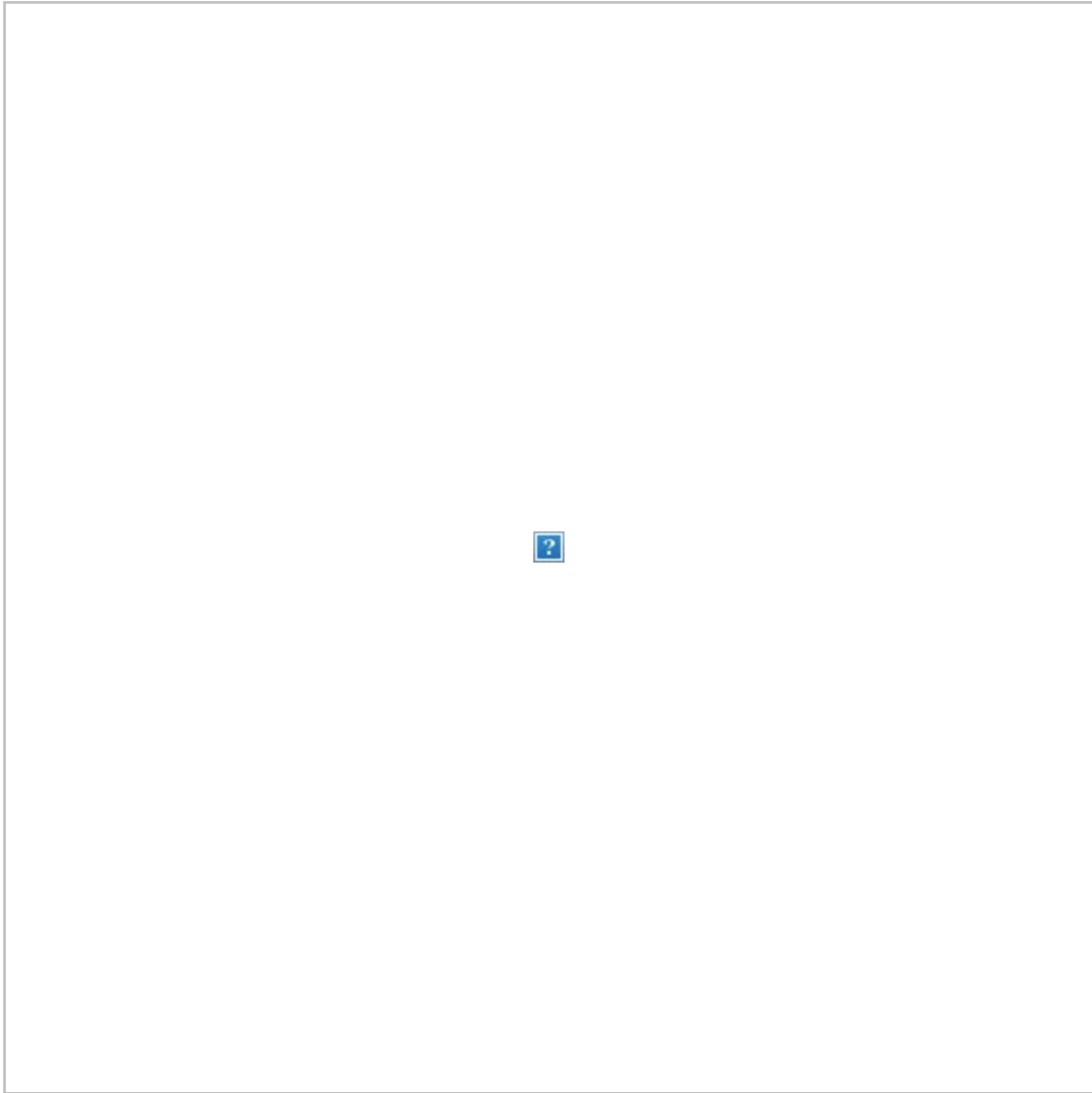


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

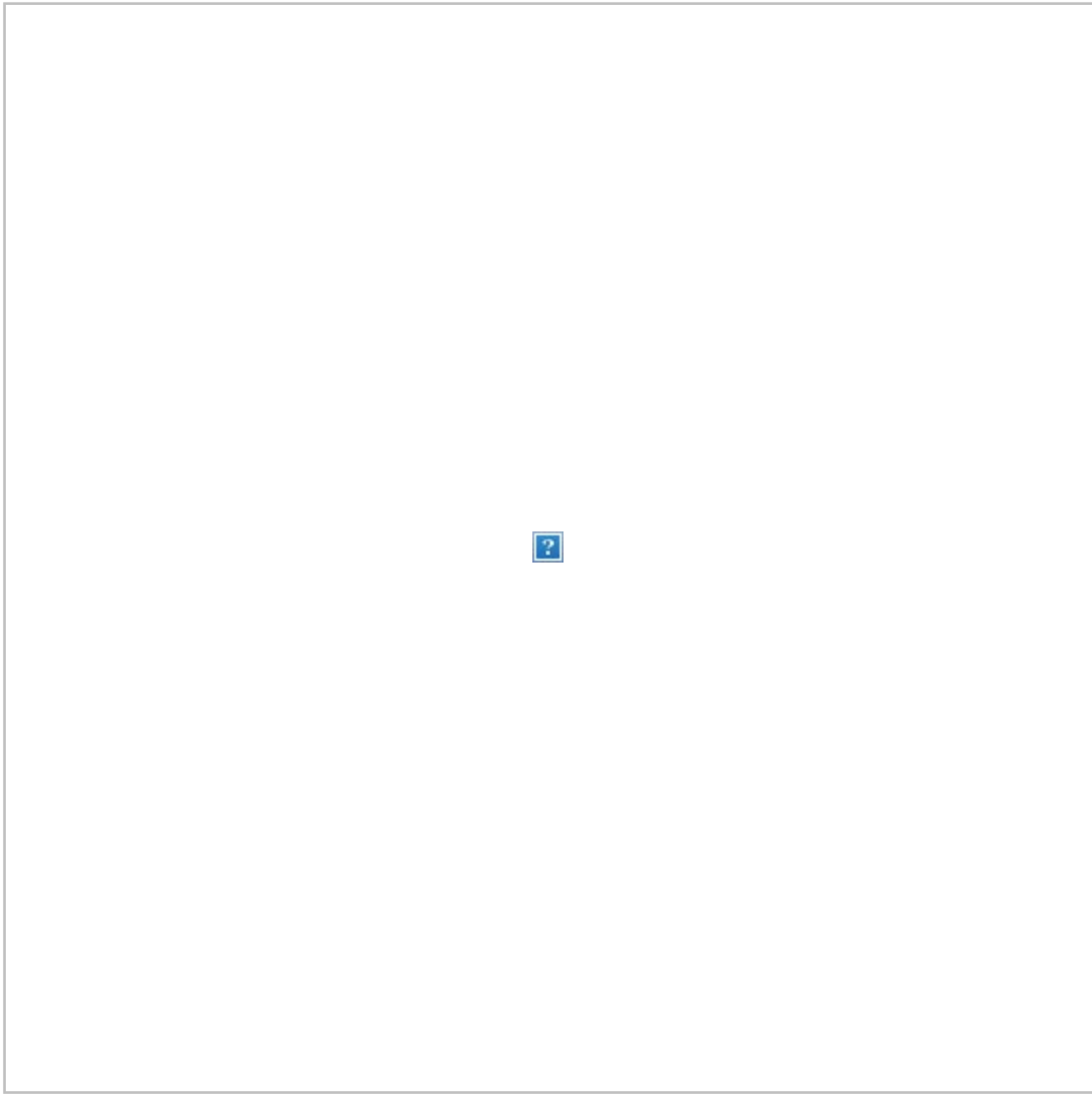


Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:

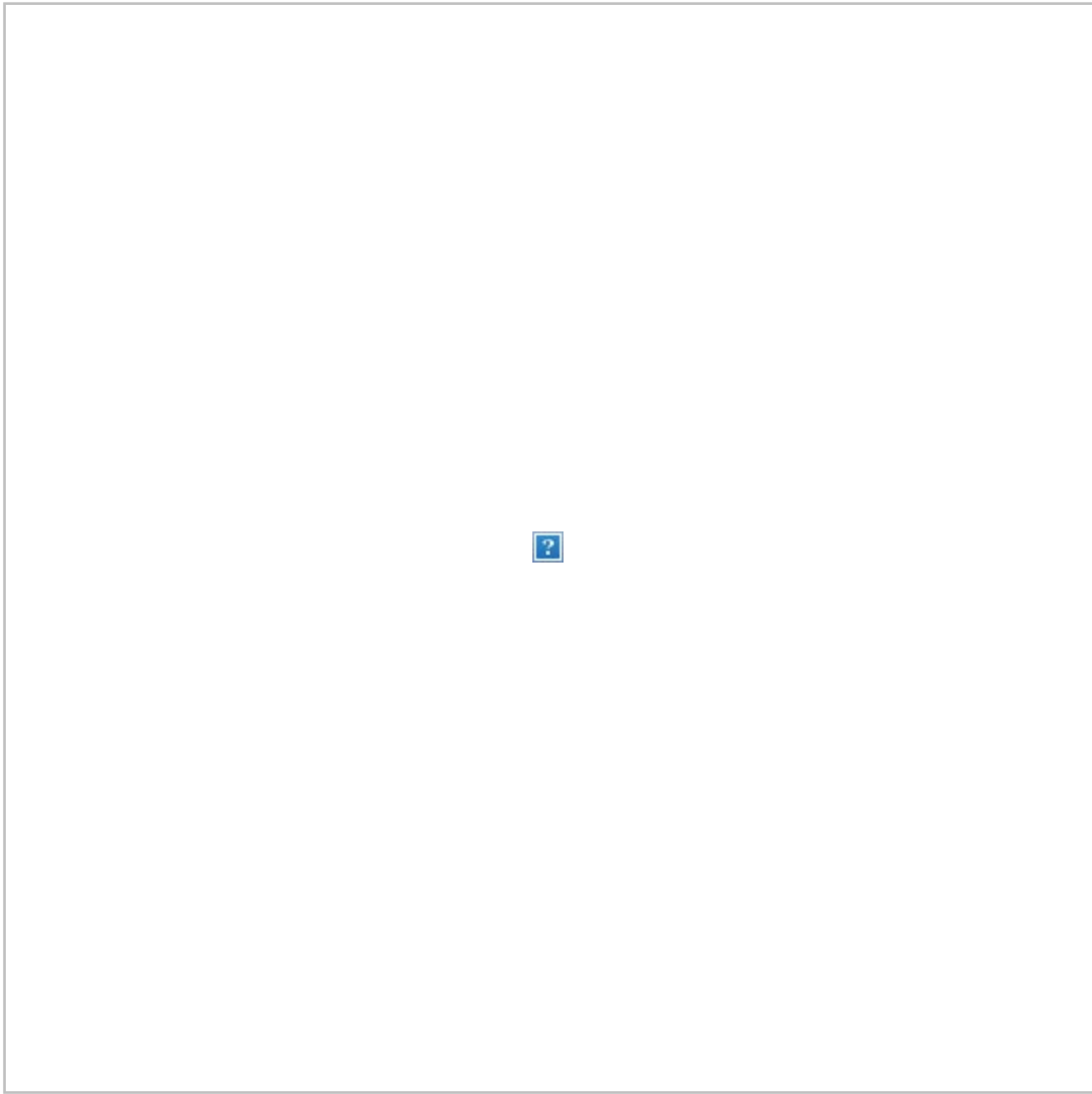


A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:

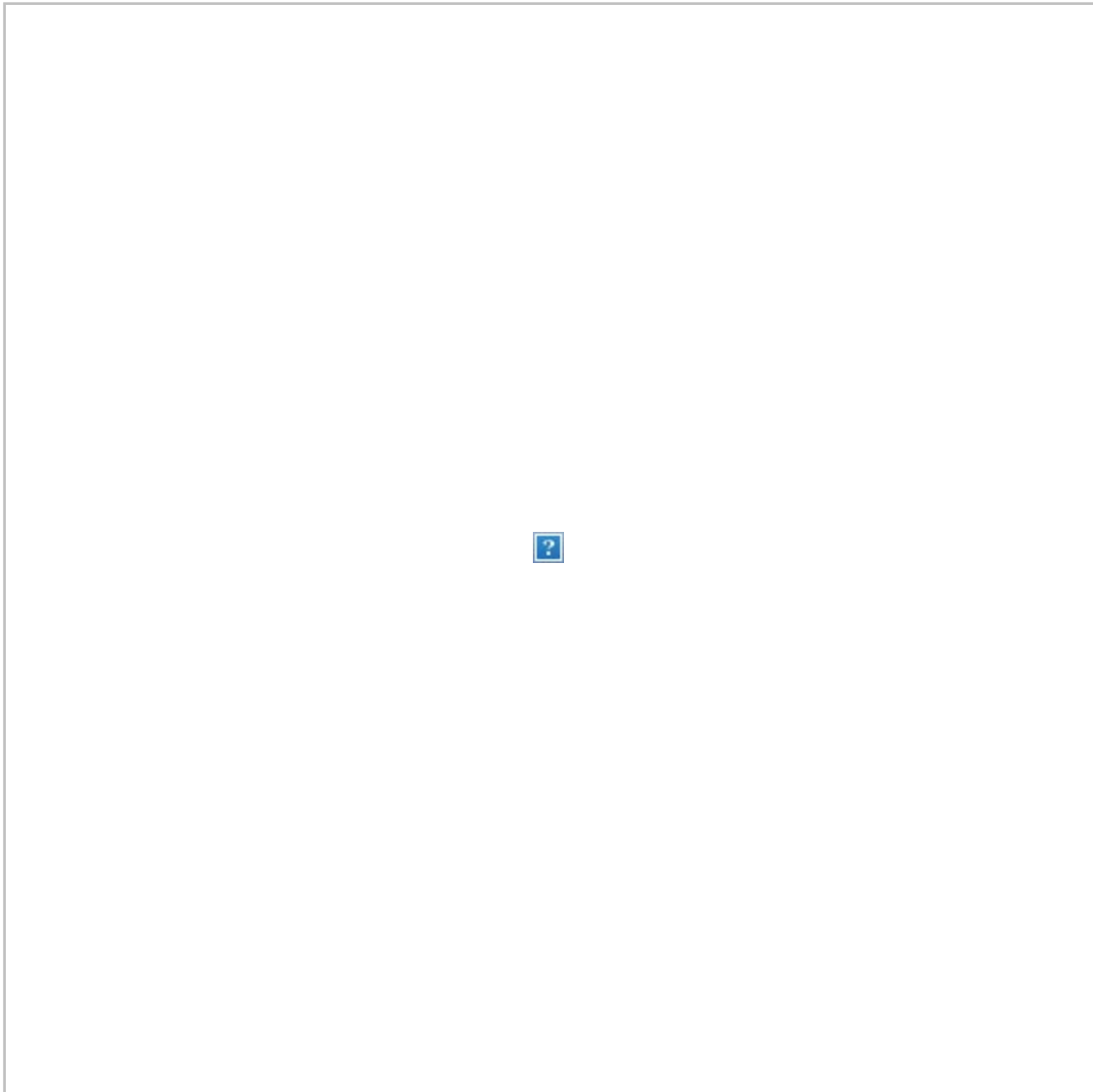




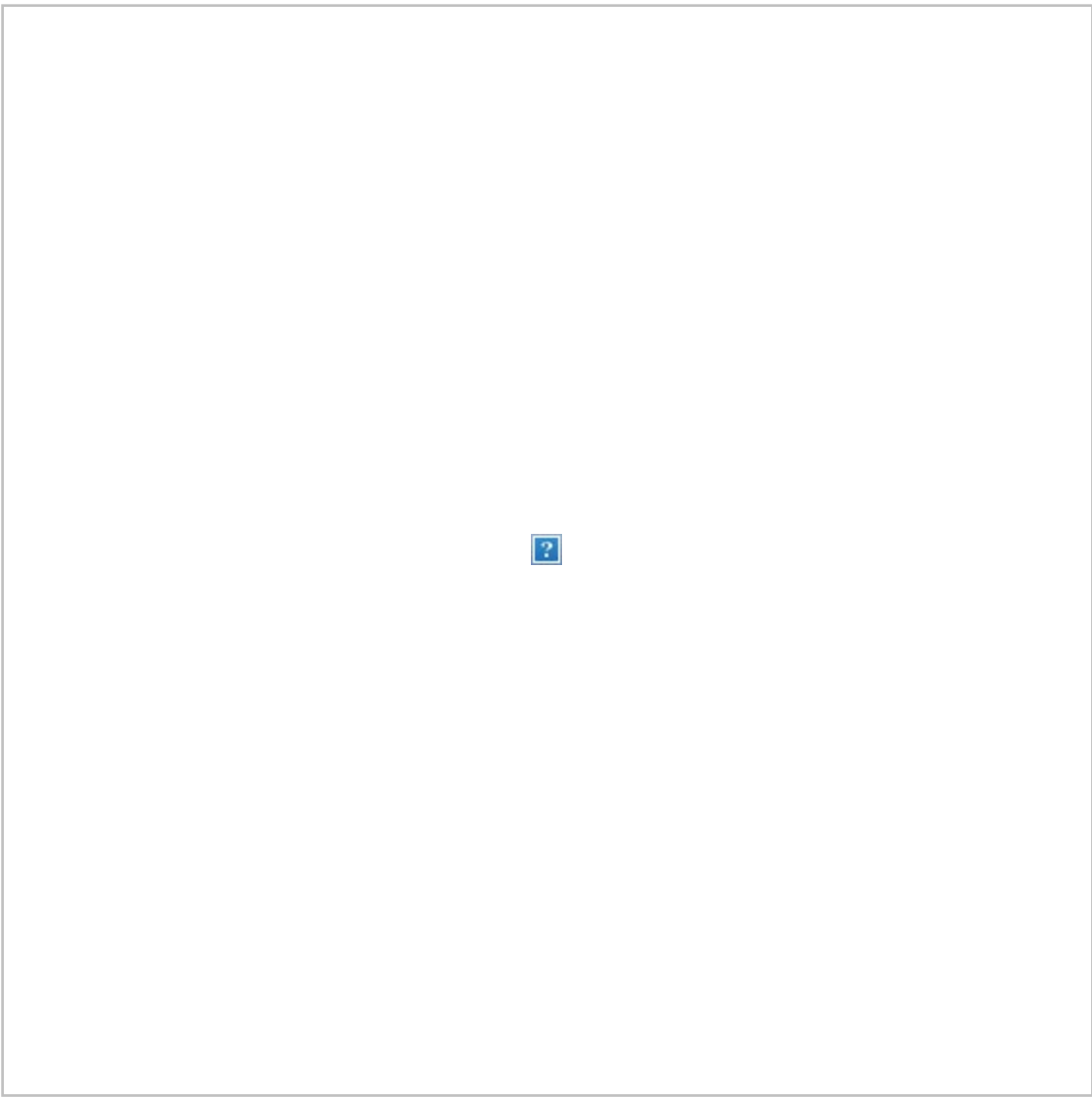
A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

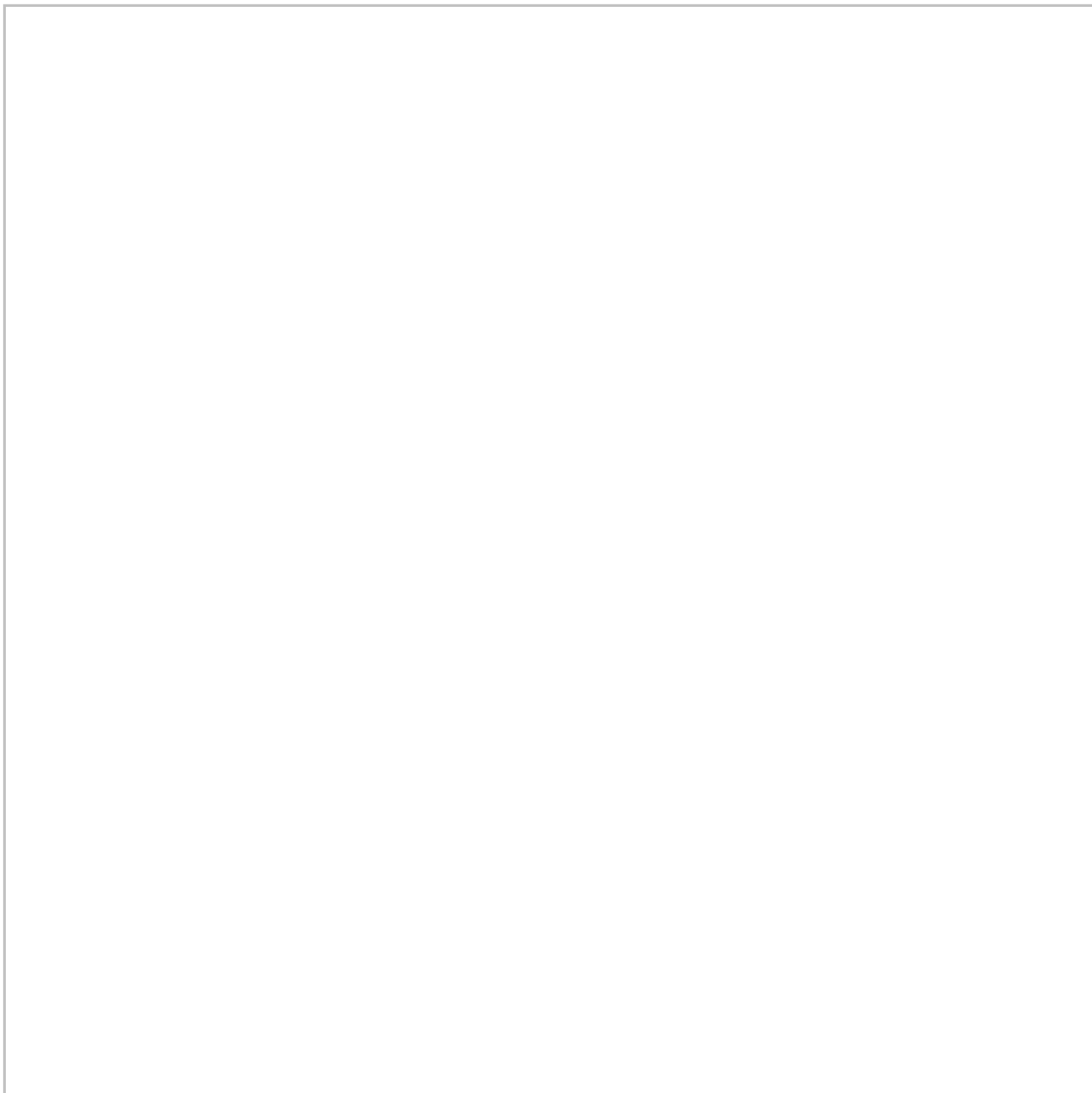


A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:



Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:

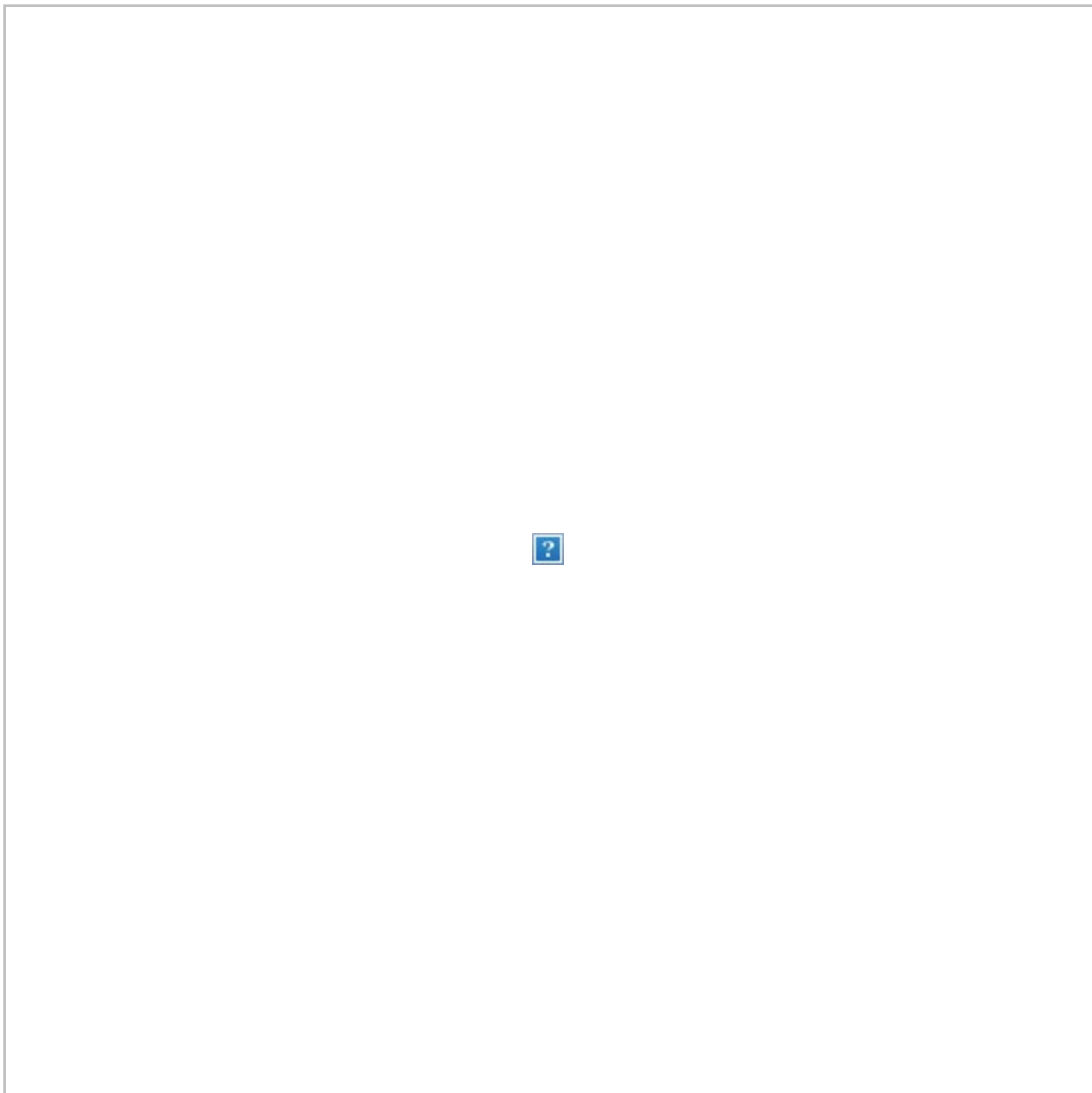




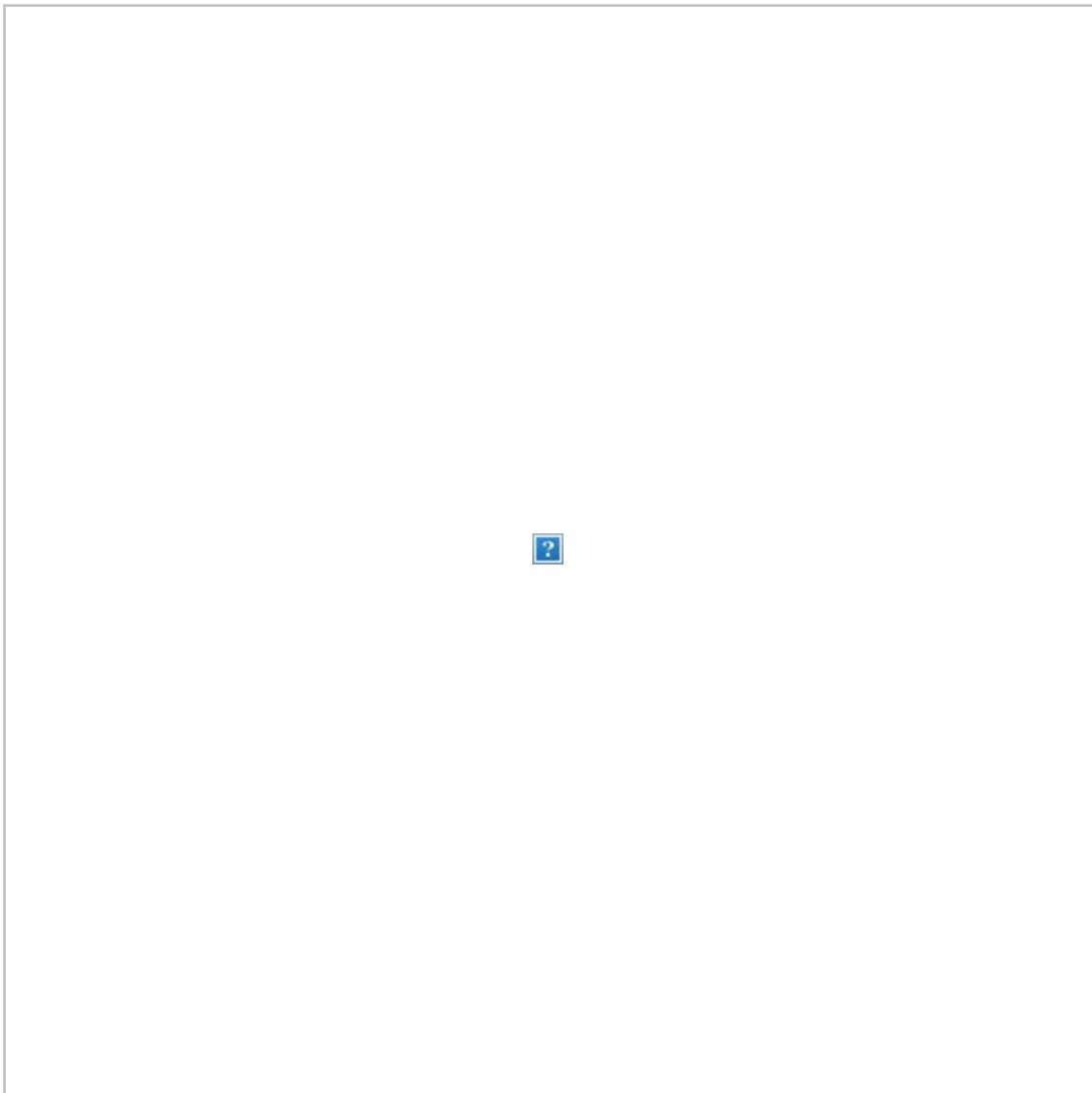
From a news writer for the journal Nature:



Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:



The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:





And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:

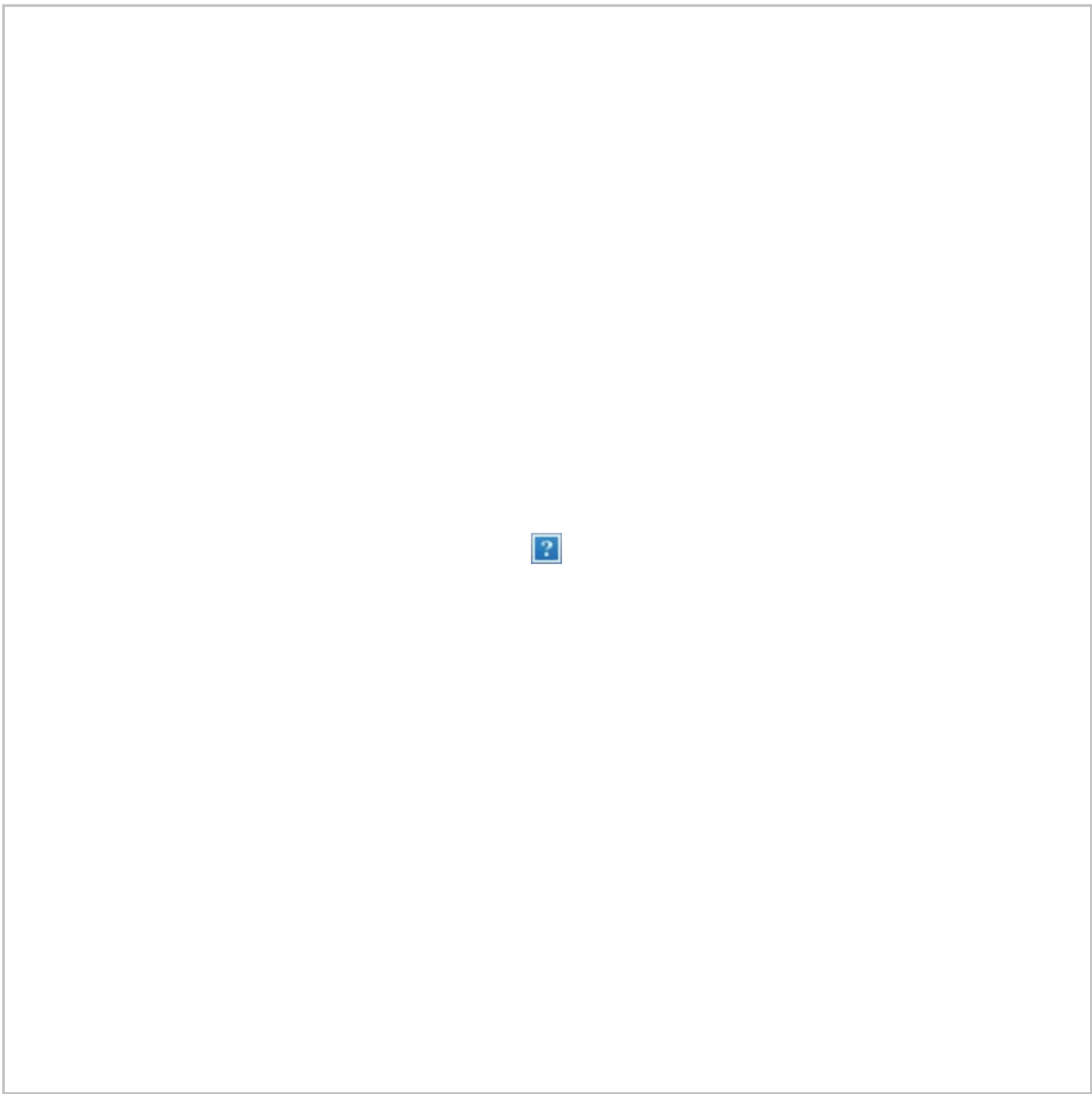


Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:





Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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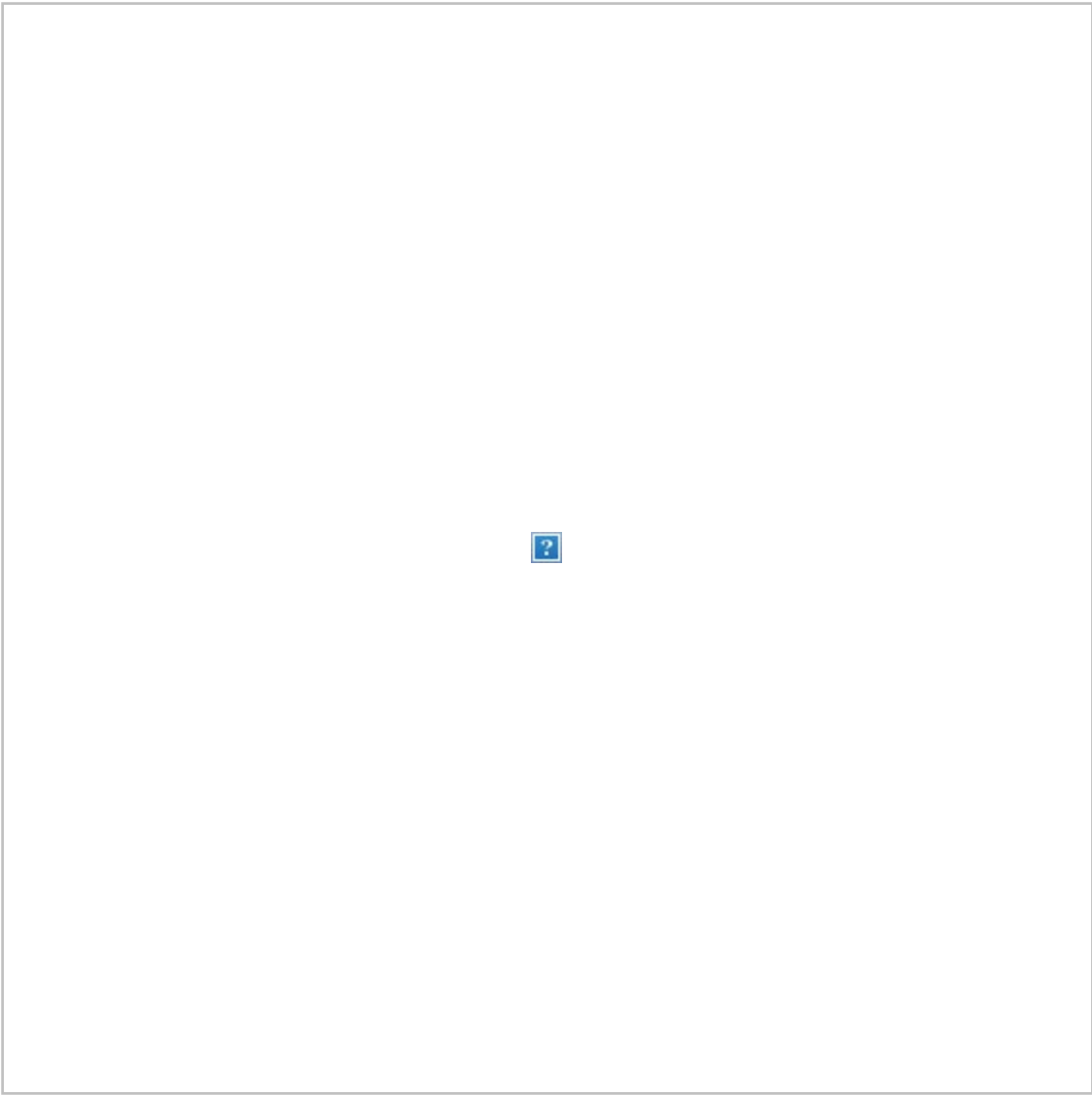
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# The Daily 202

Share:   Listen to The Big Idea

## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

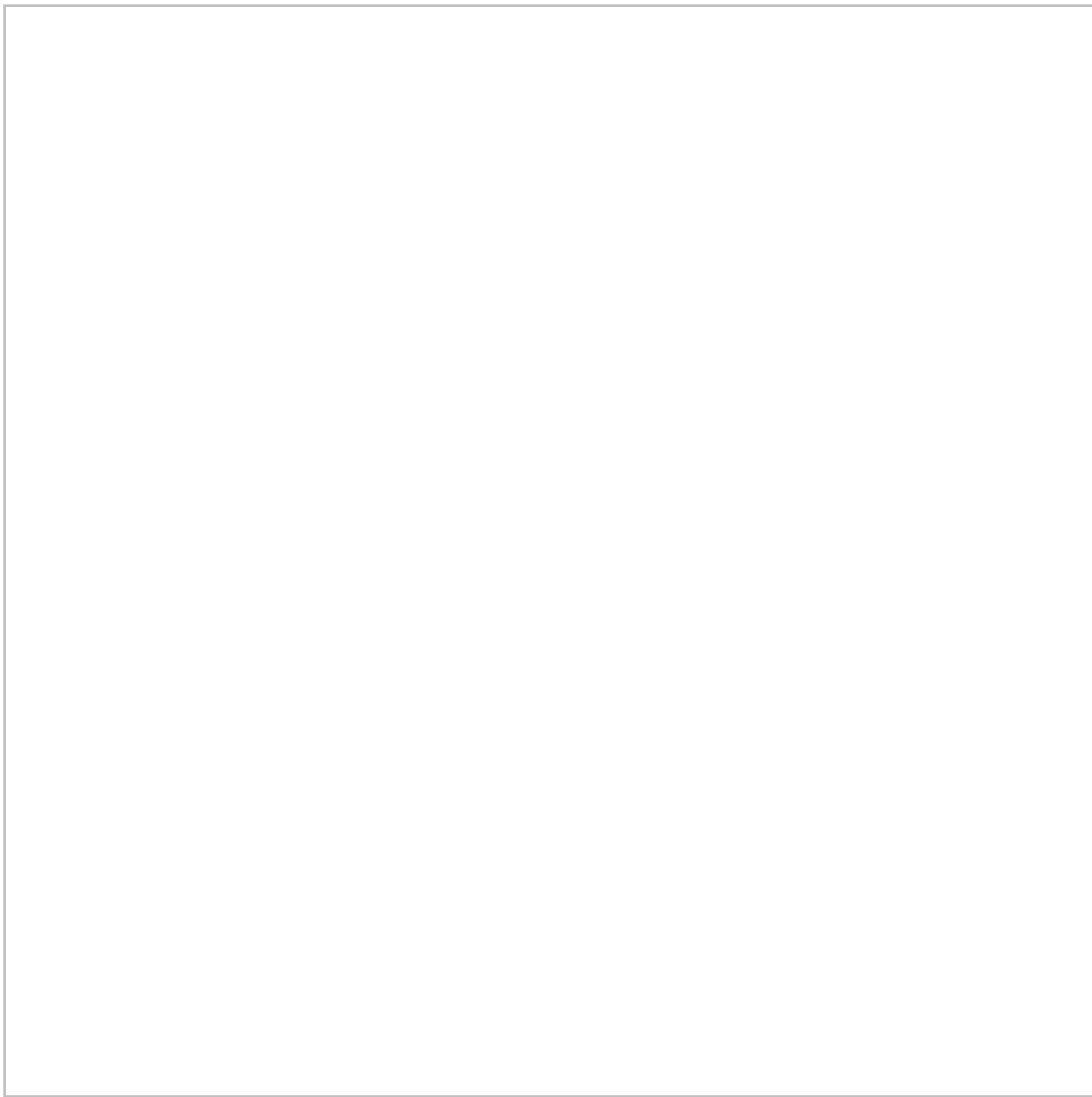
“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”



**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."



Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”



Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

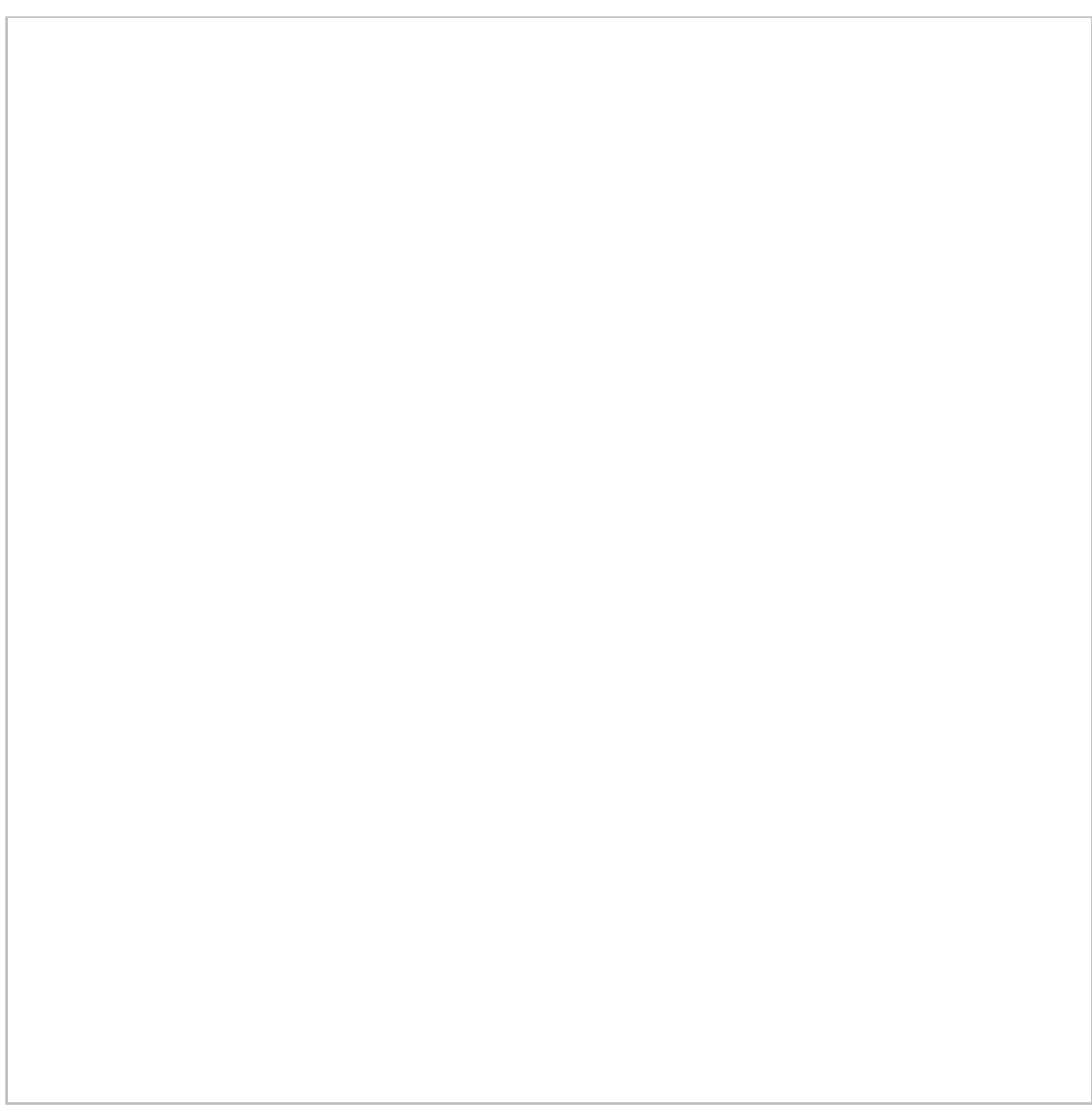
“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have



confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”



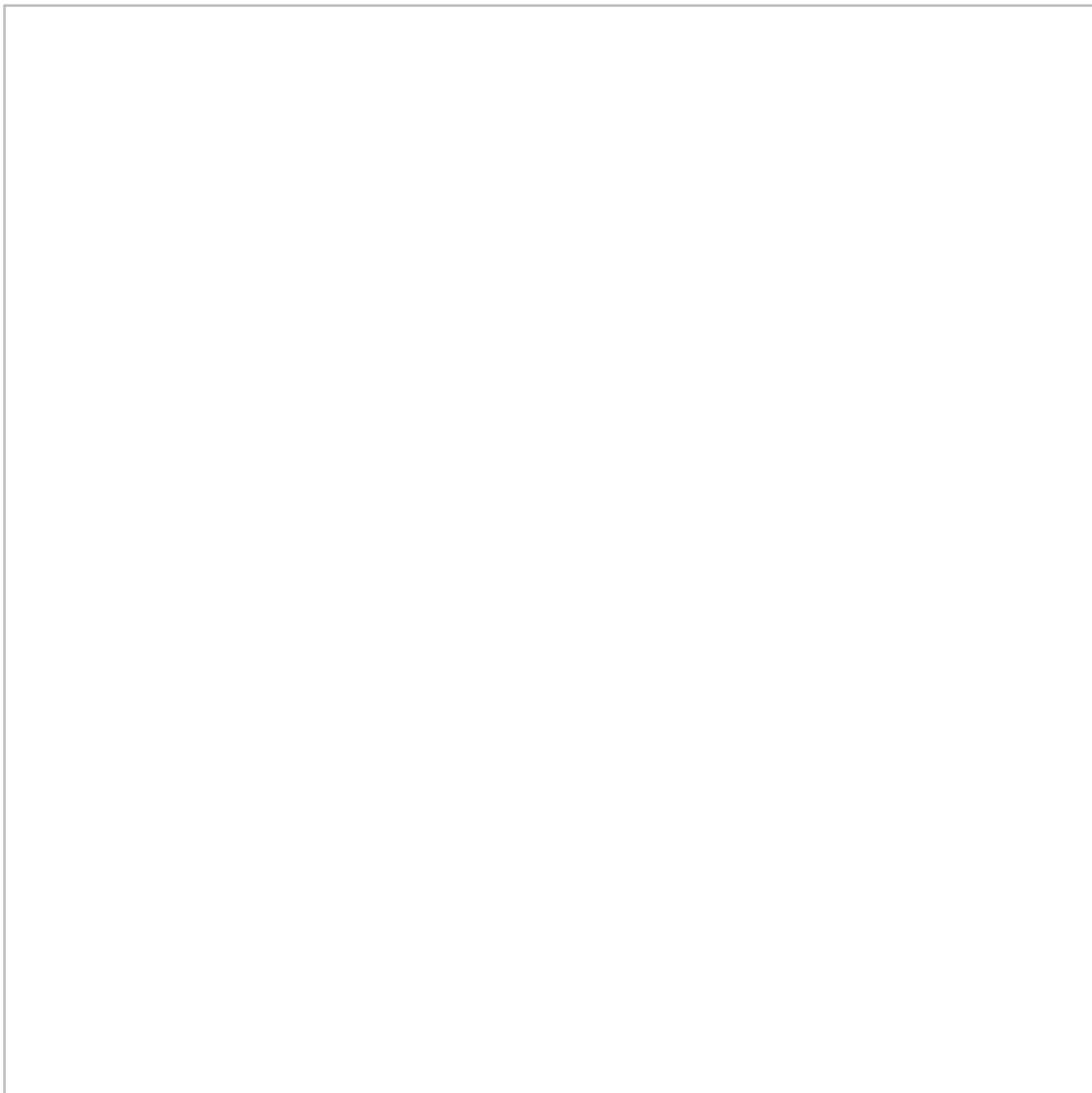
William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

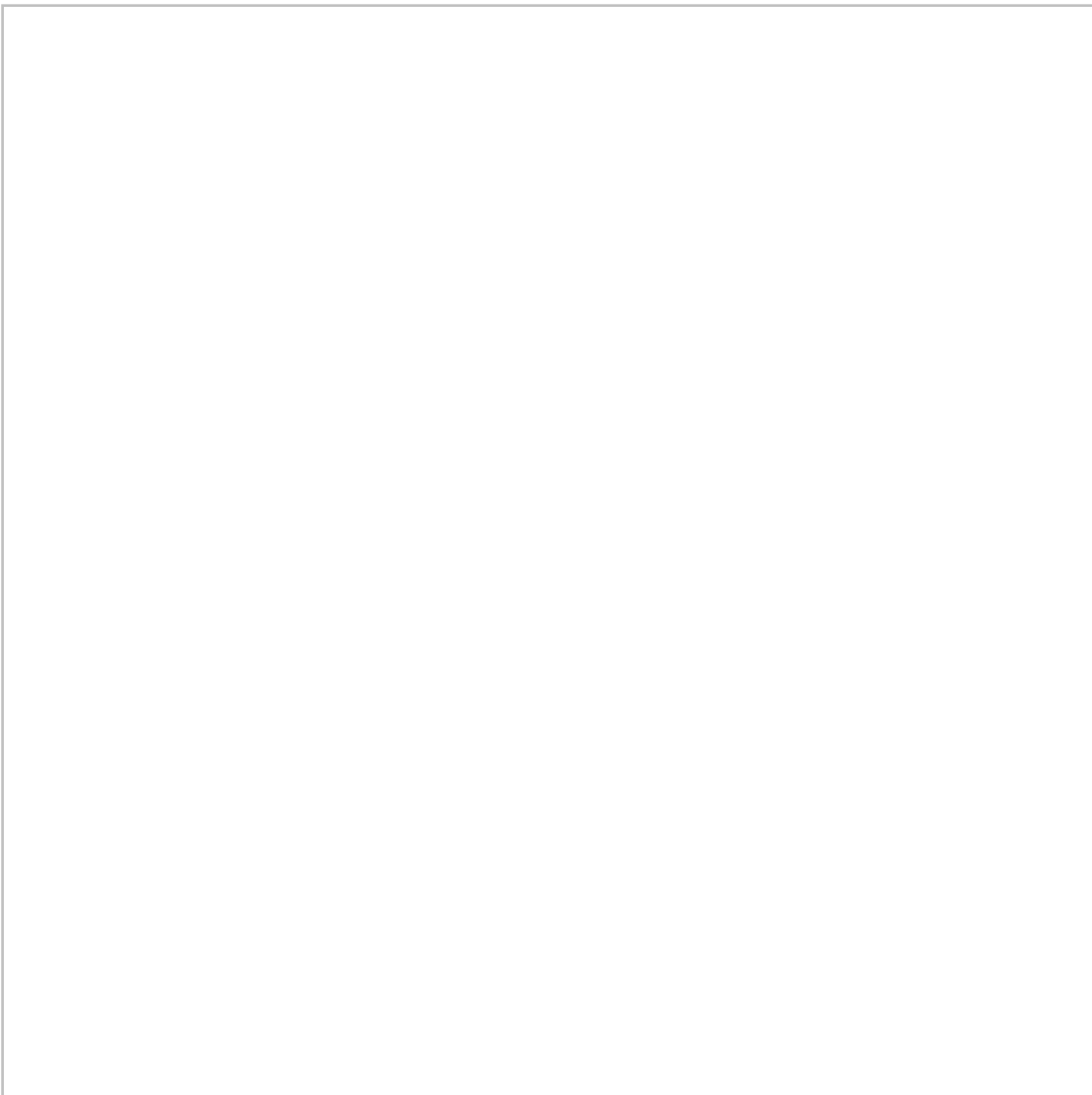


Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.



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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**

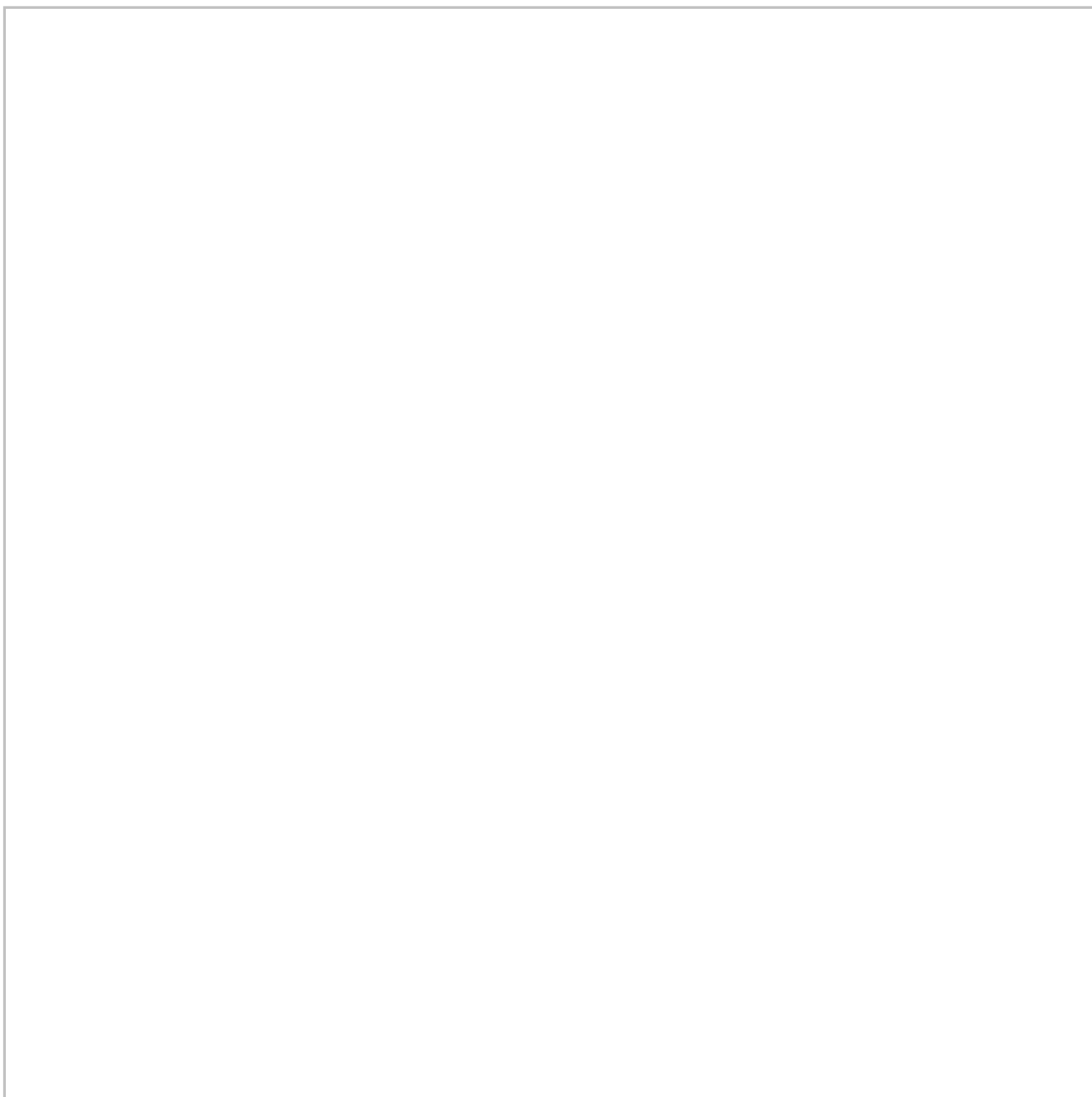


W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."



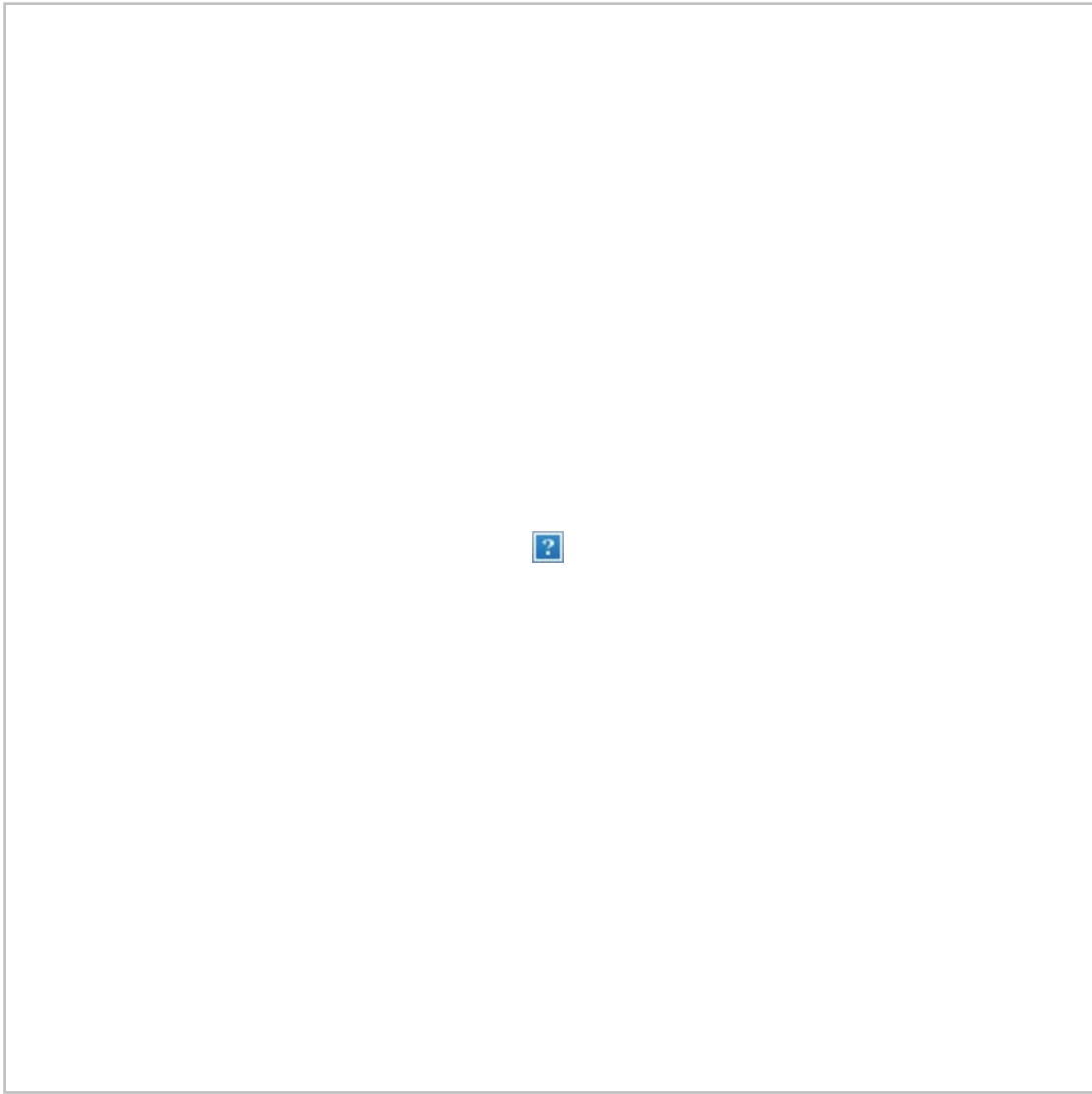


Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

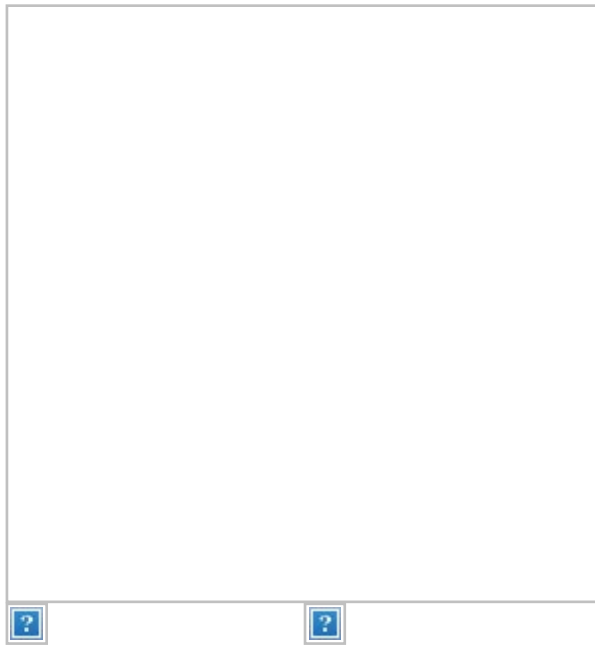
-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."



NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)



### GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already



in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation. [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#):** "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients. [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#):** "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using



settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will ‘fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.’ **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**”

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who’s accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he “really” misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel’s Anthony Man reports](#): “‘The worst part of this is being broke,’ he said. ... ‘I’ve lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I’m not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.’”

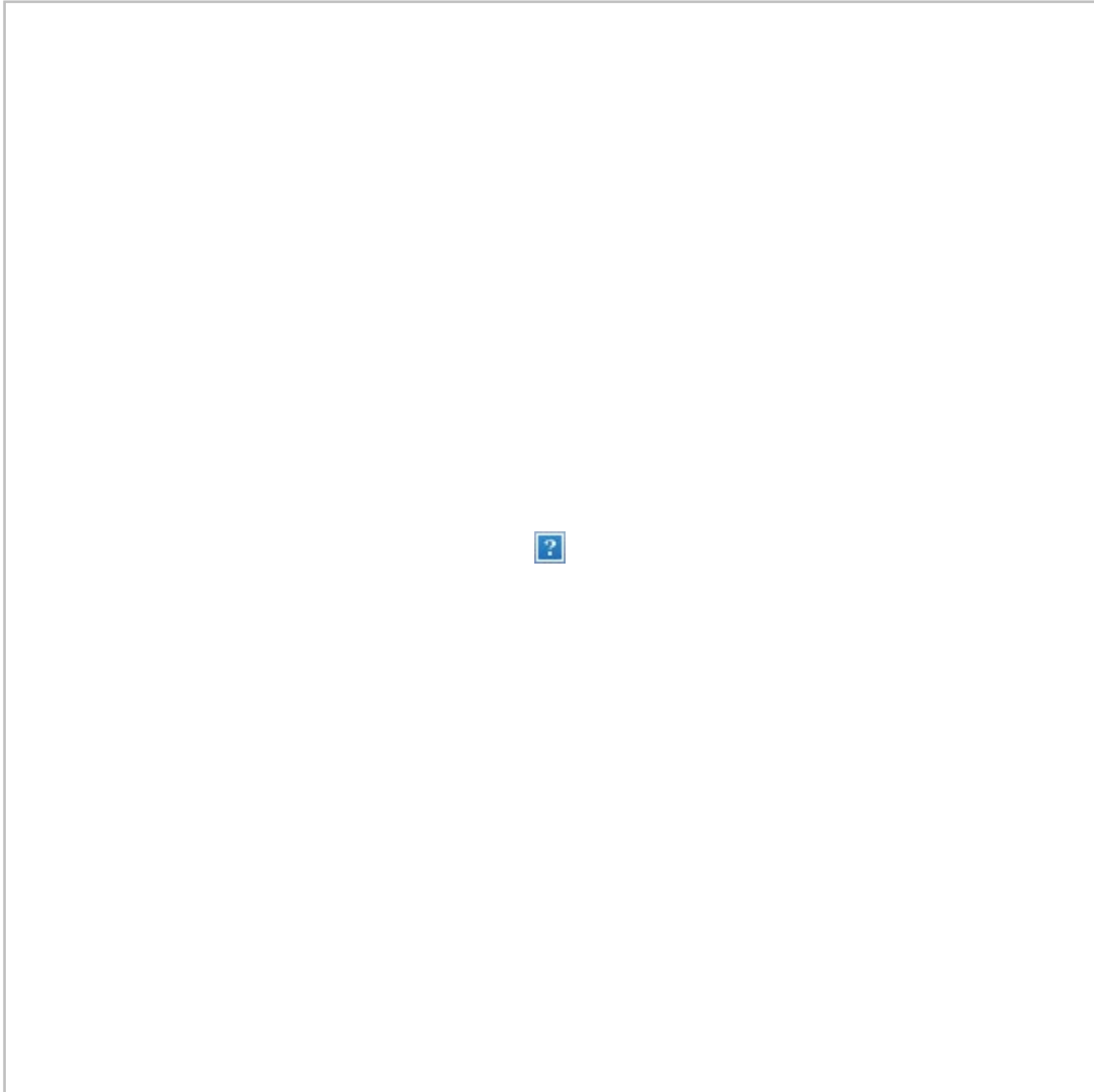
**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

"While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various



smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

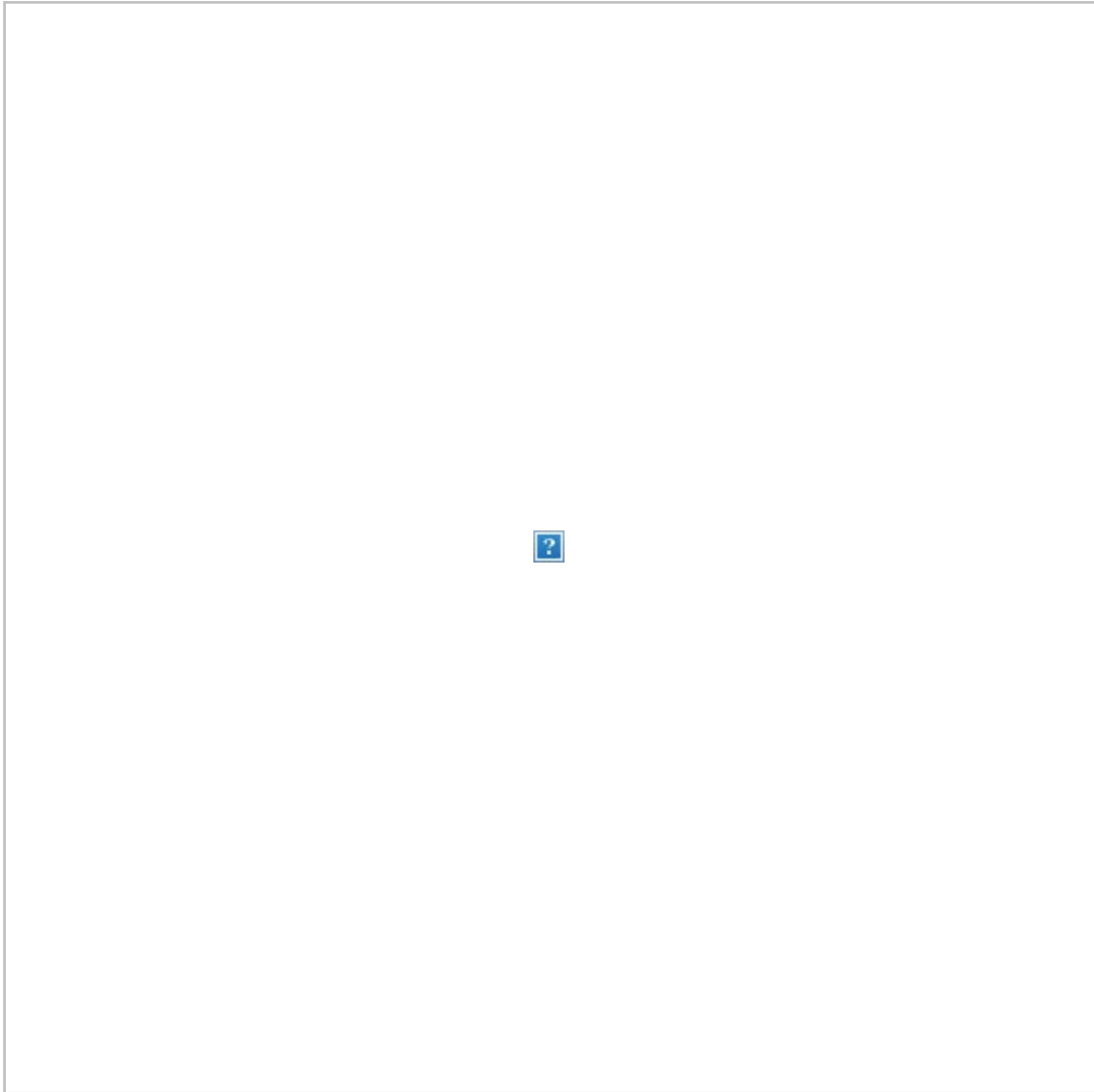
[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox



Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill.** [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#): "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia.** [Eli Rosenberg reports](#): "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

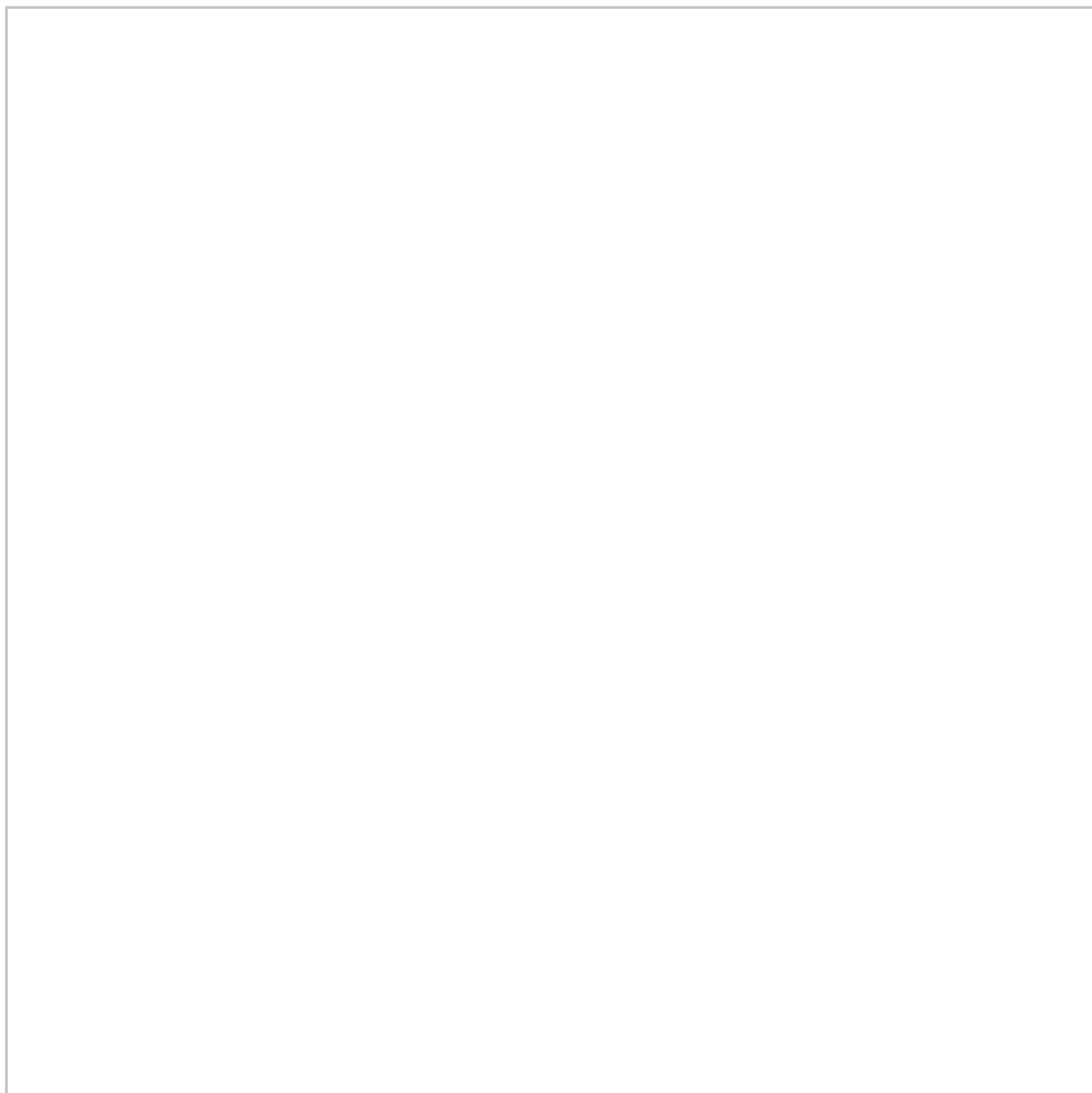
**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

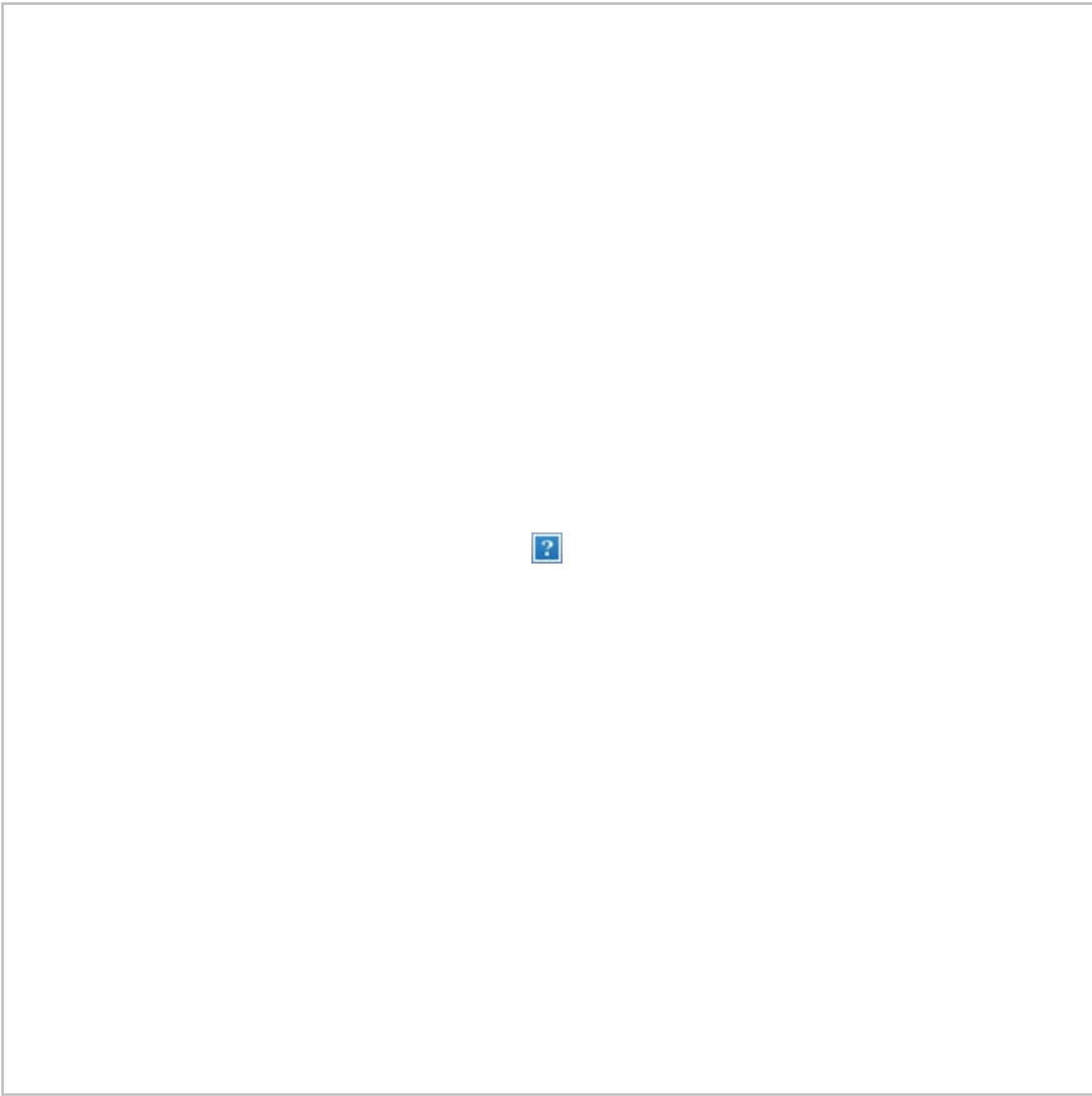
A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:



From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:



From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:

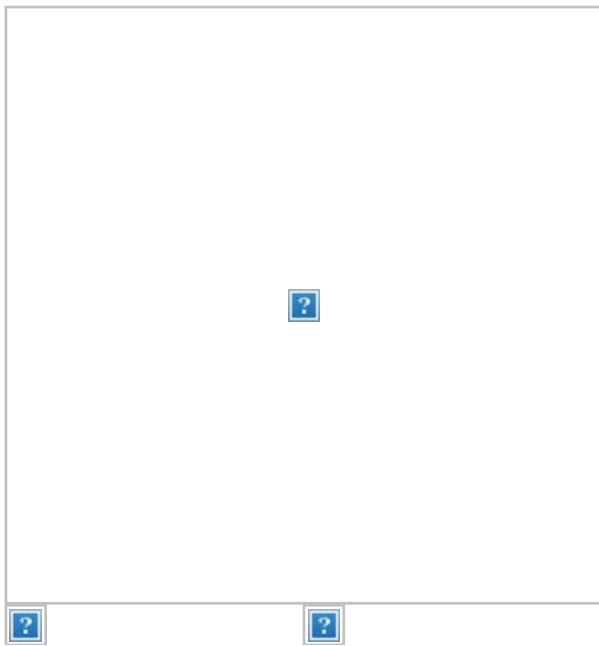
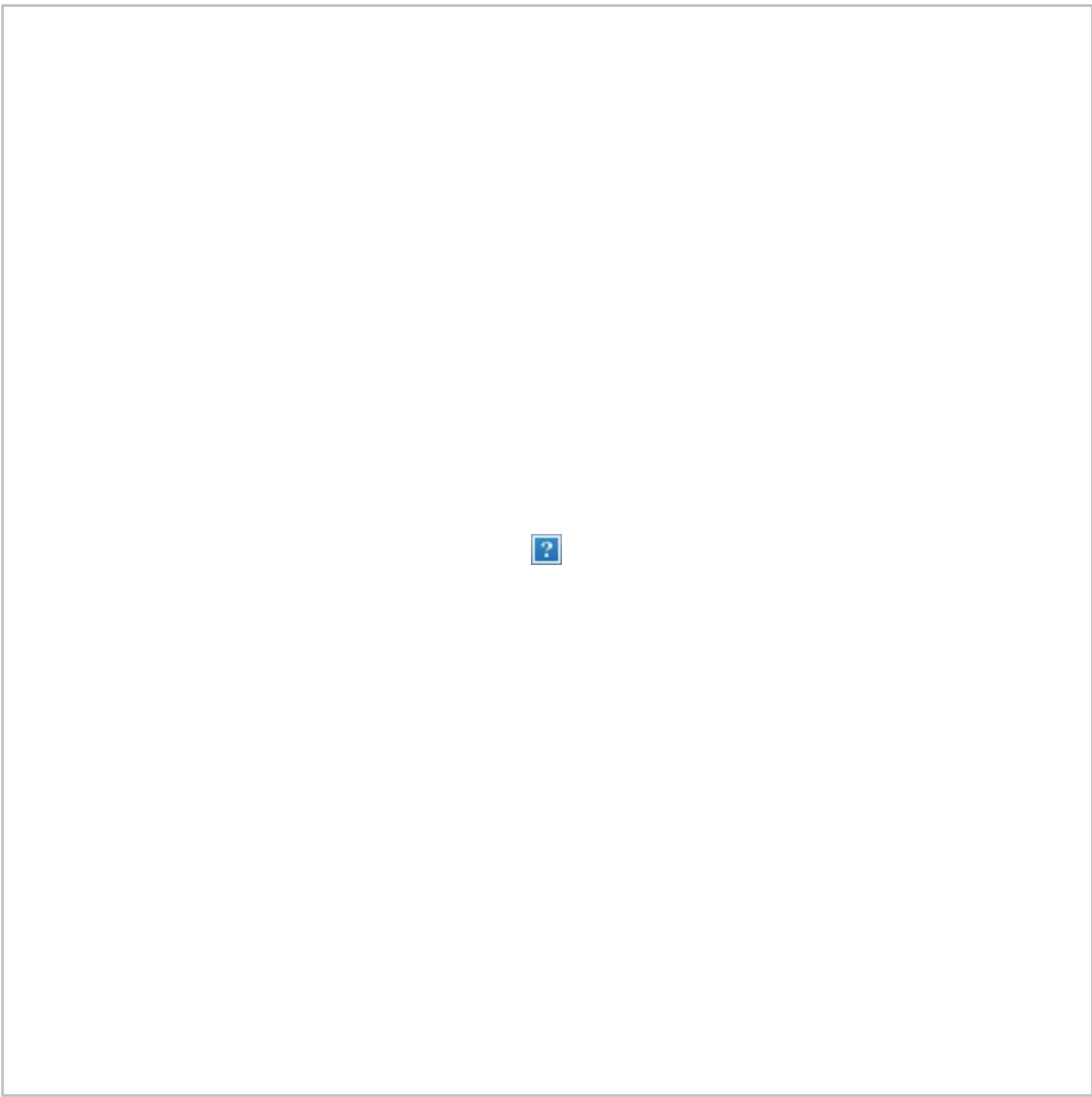


One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:





A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:

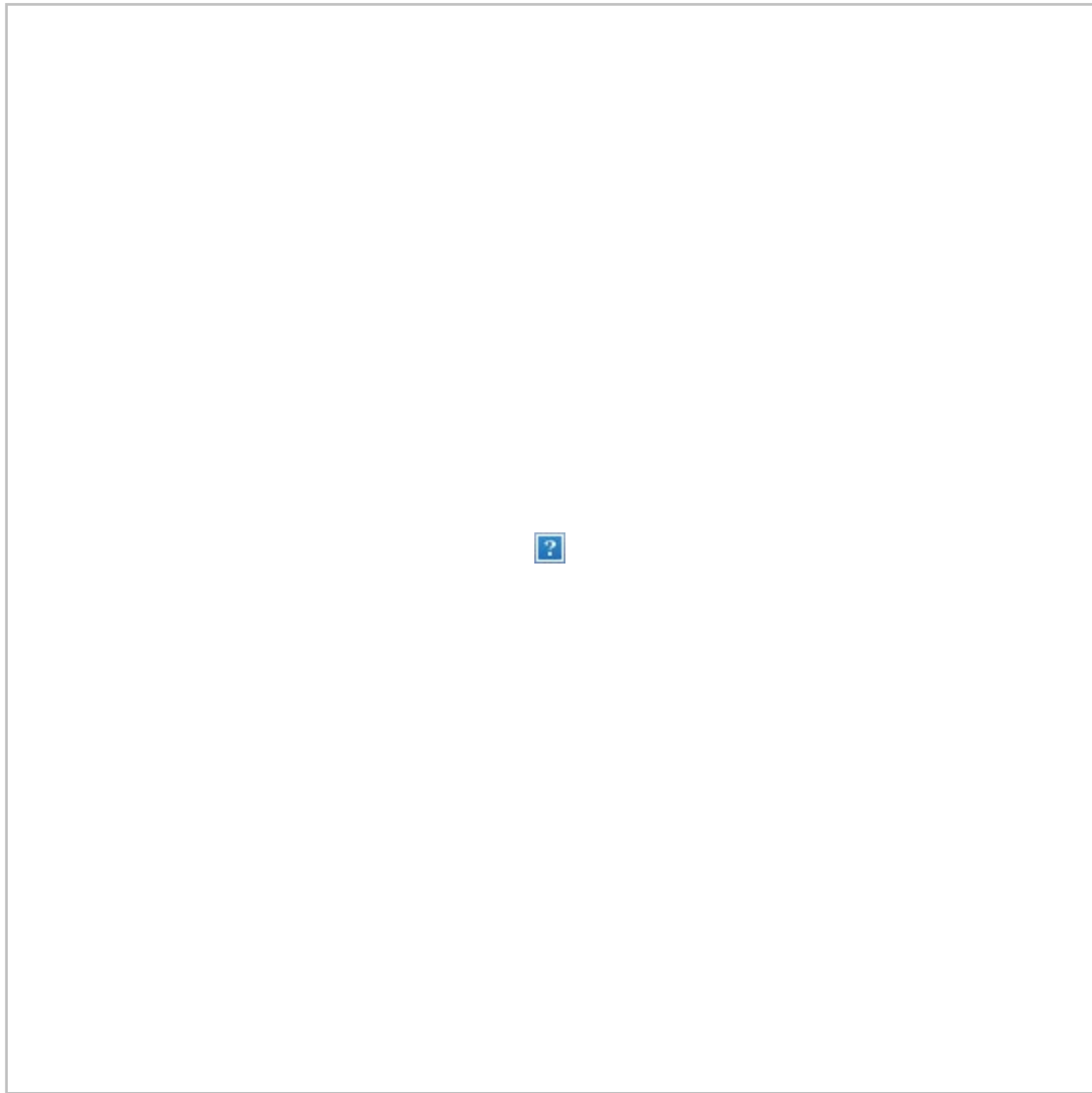


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

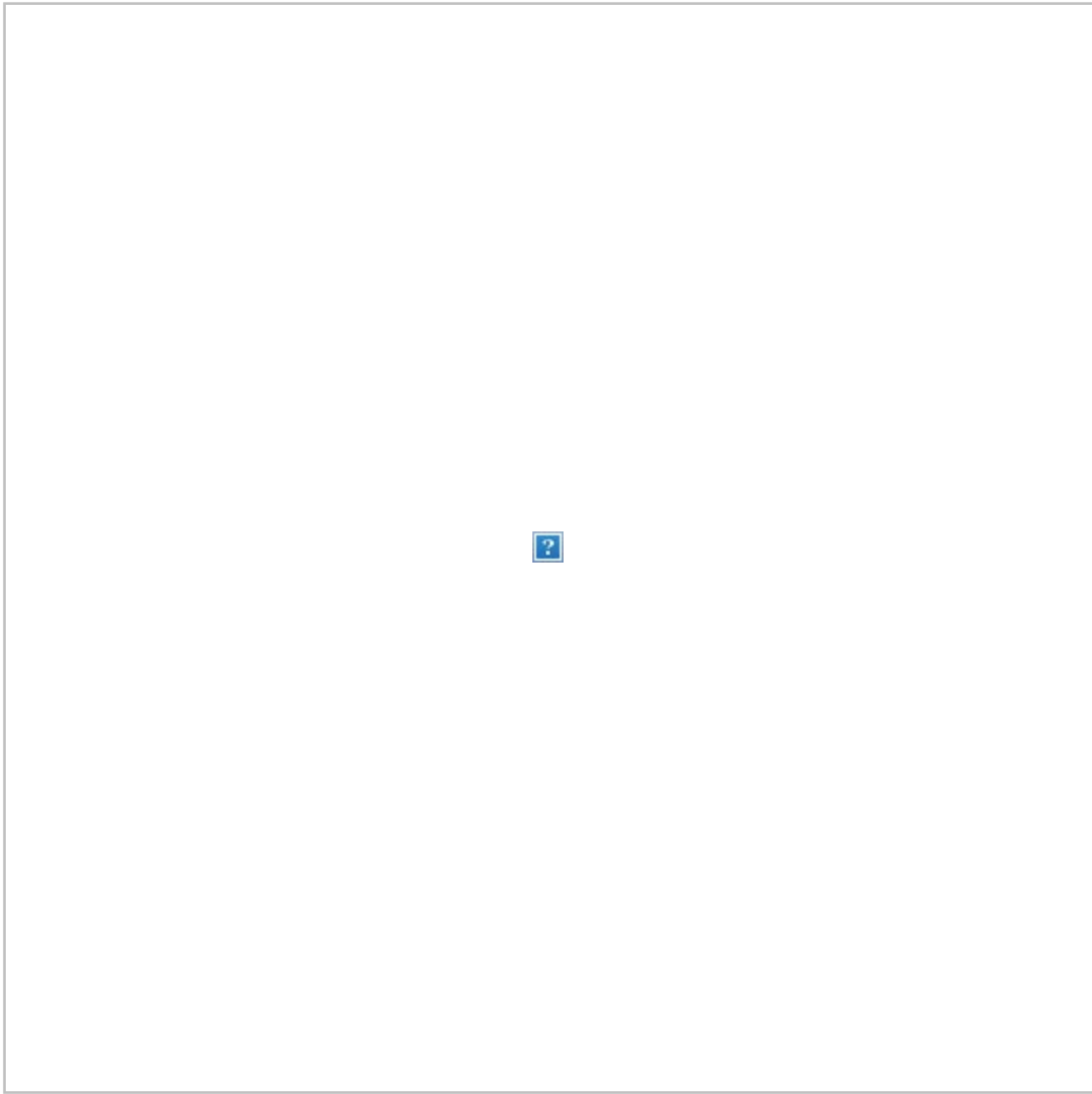


Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



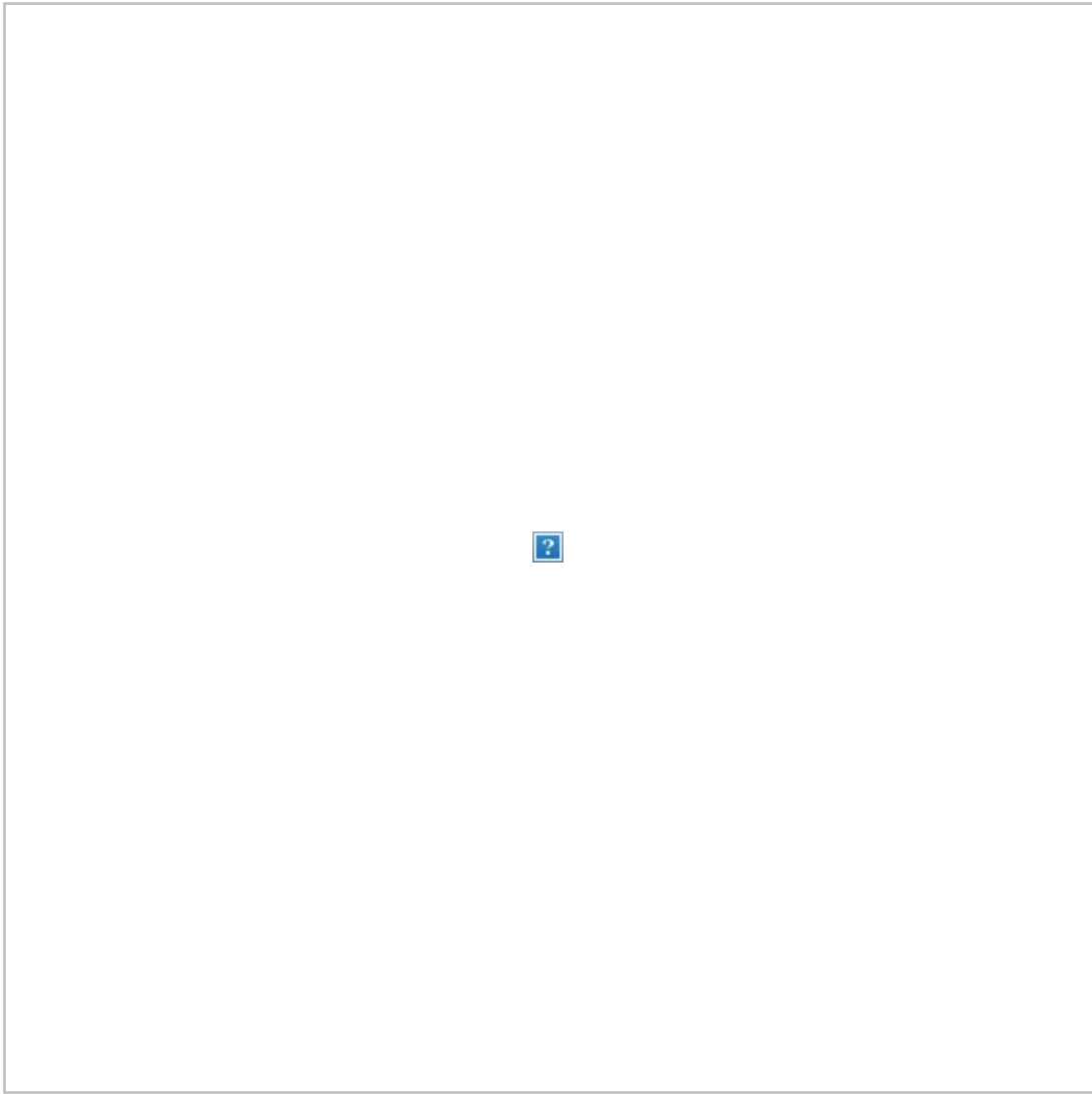
Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:



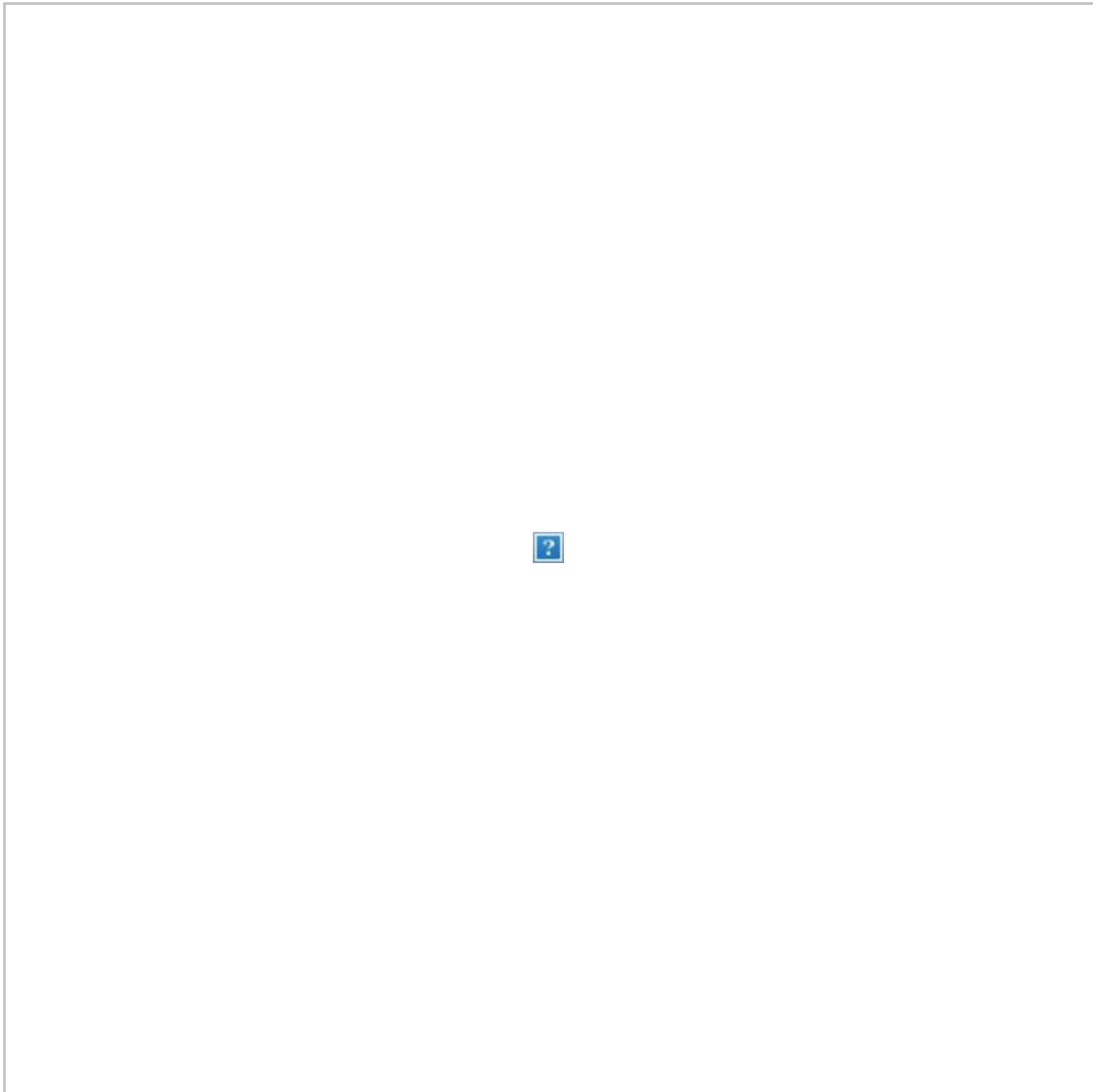
A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:



A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

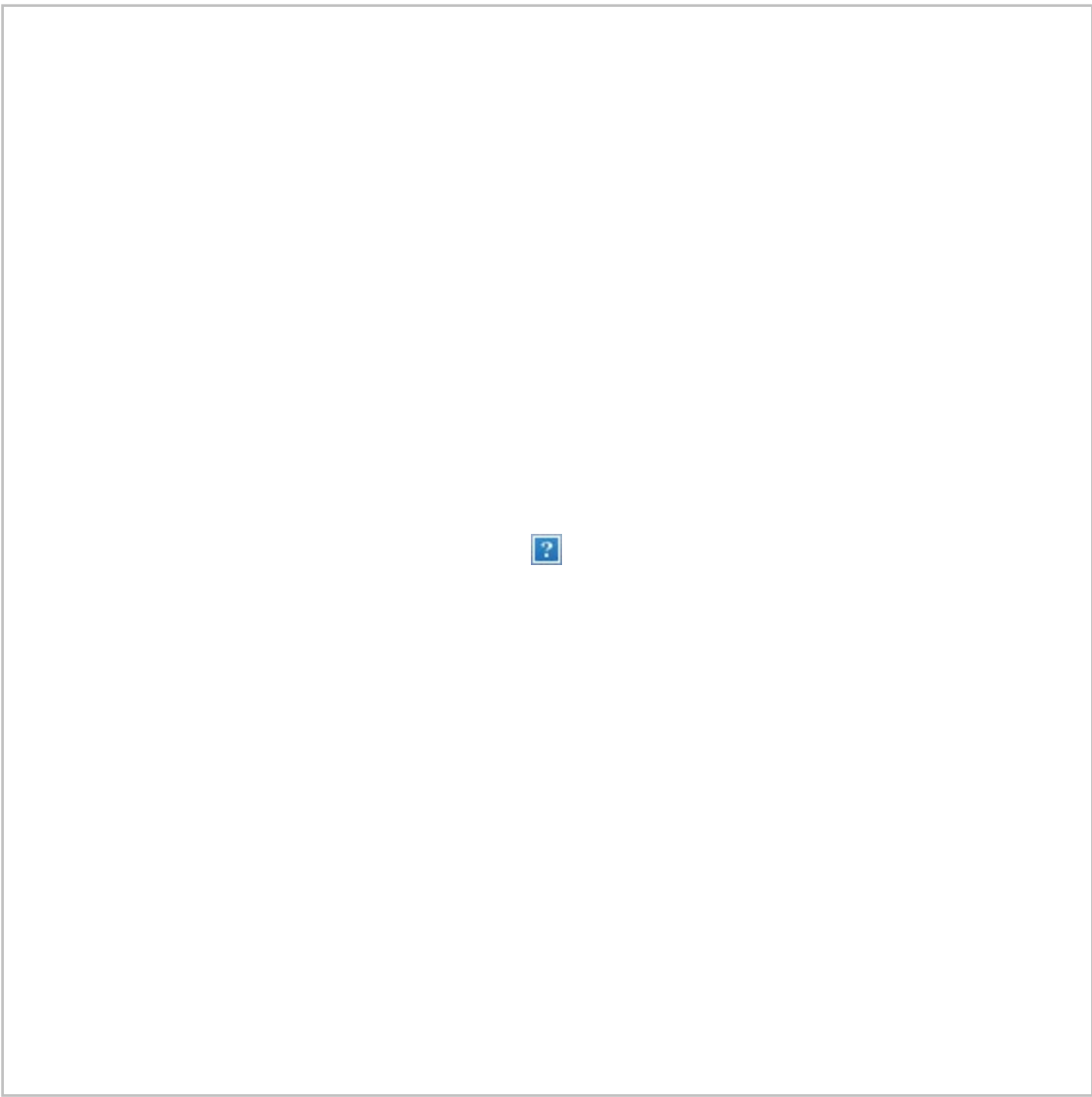


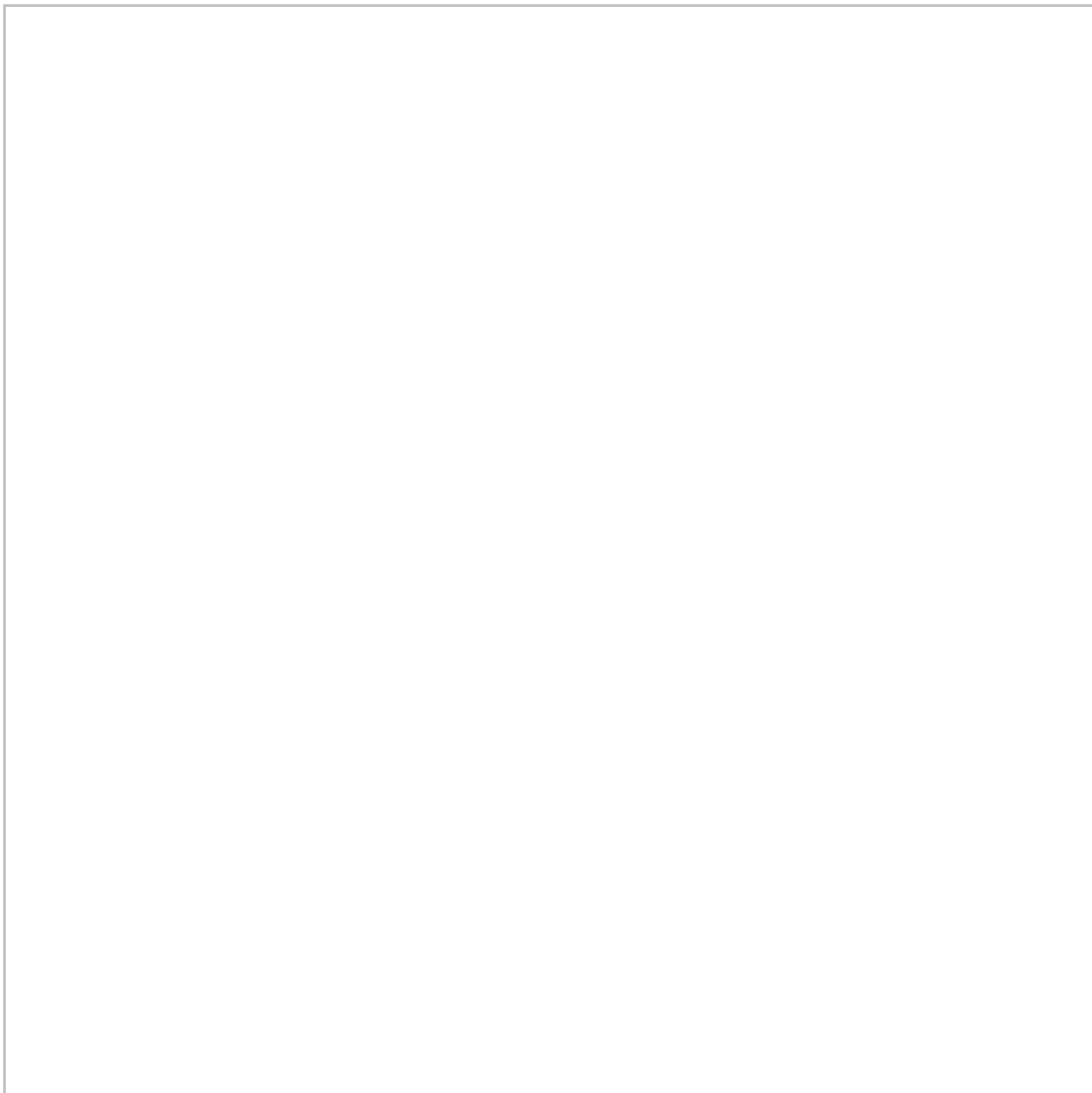
A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:



Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:



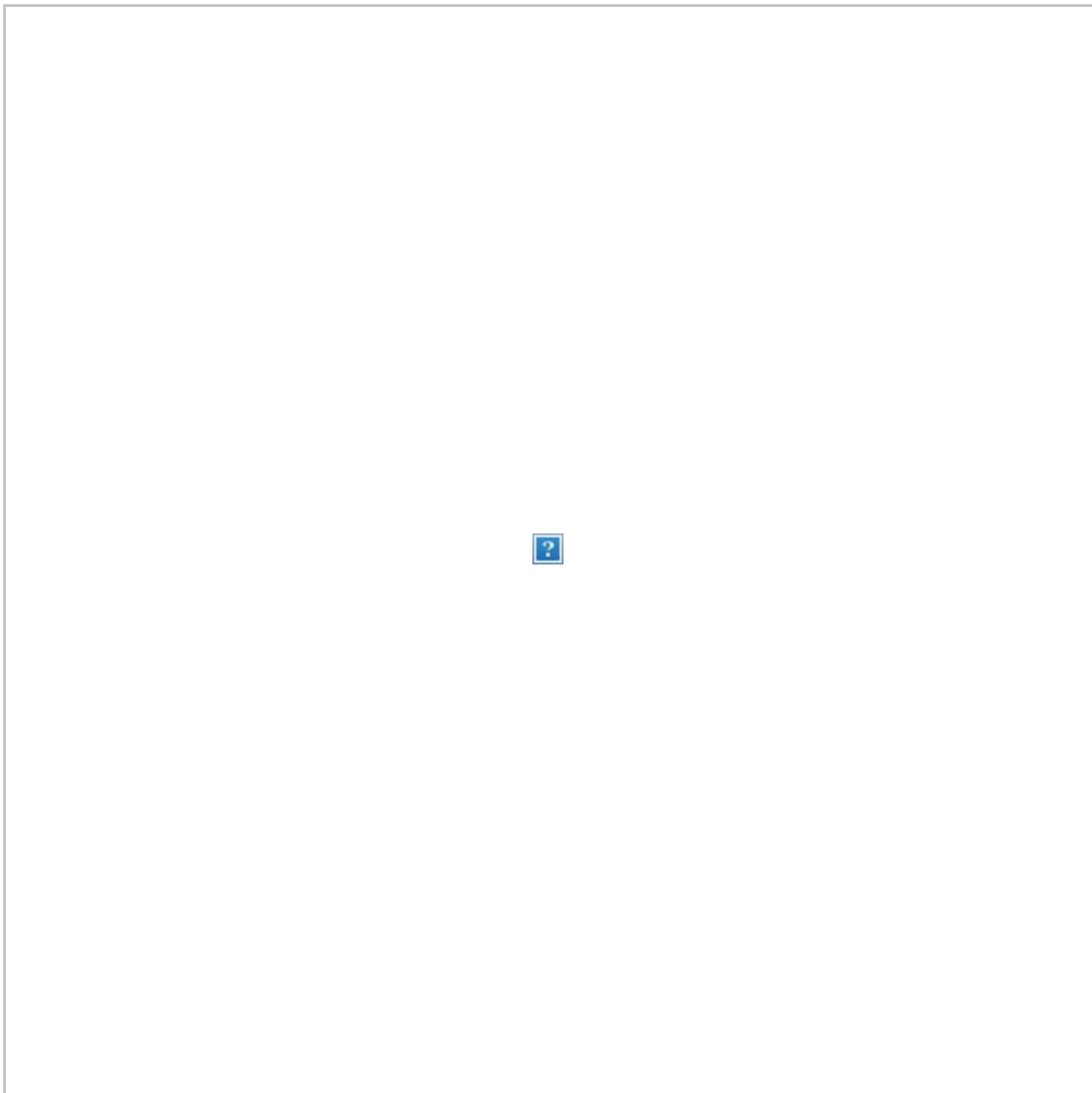




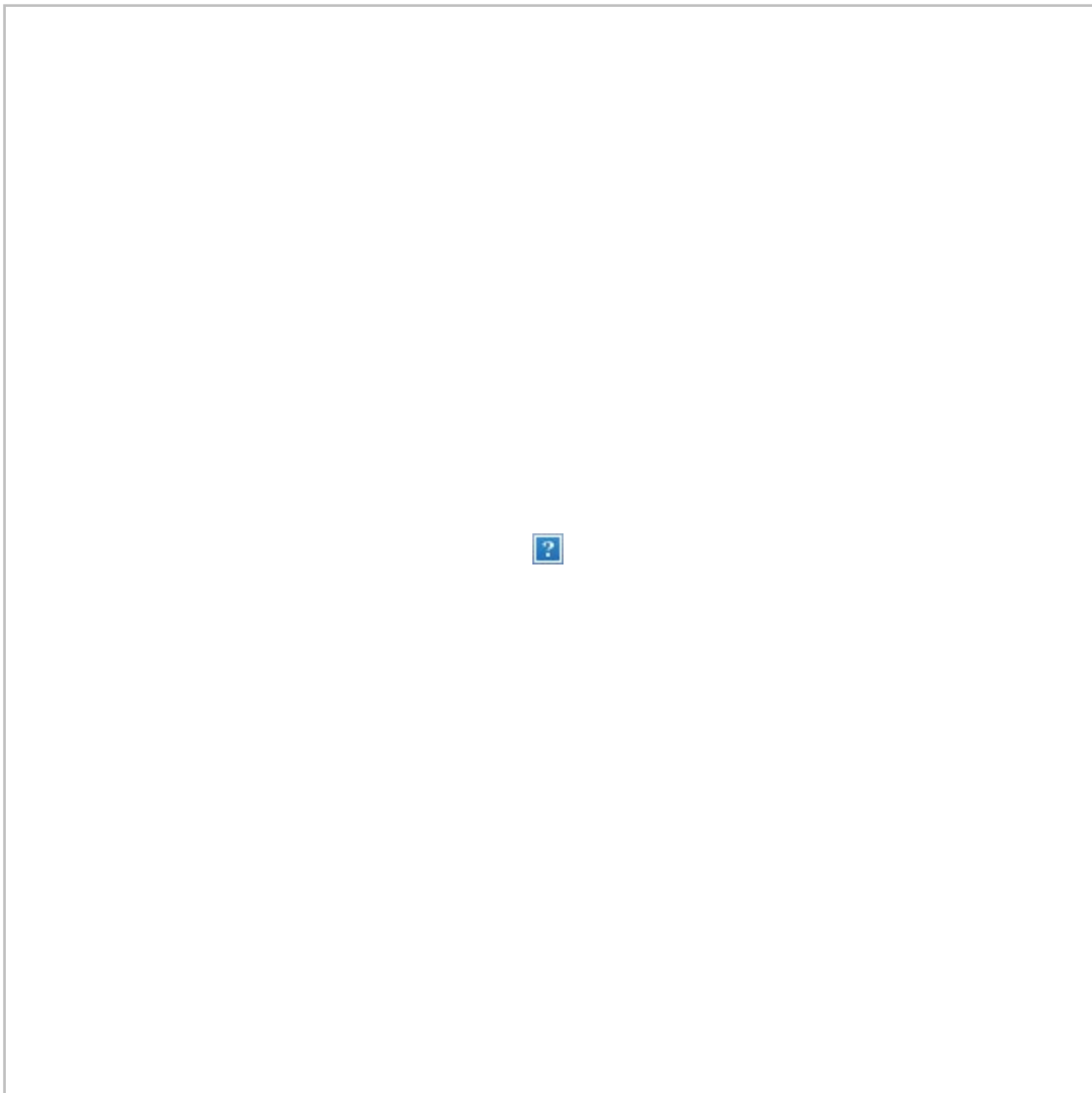
From a news writer for the journal Nature:



Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:



The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:



And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**



reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

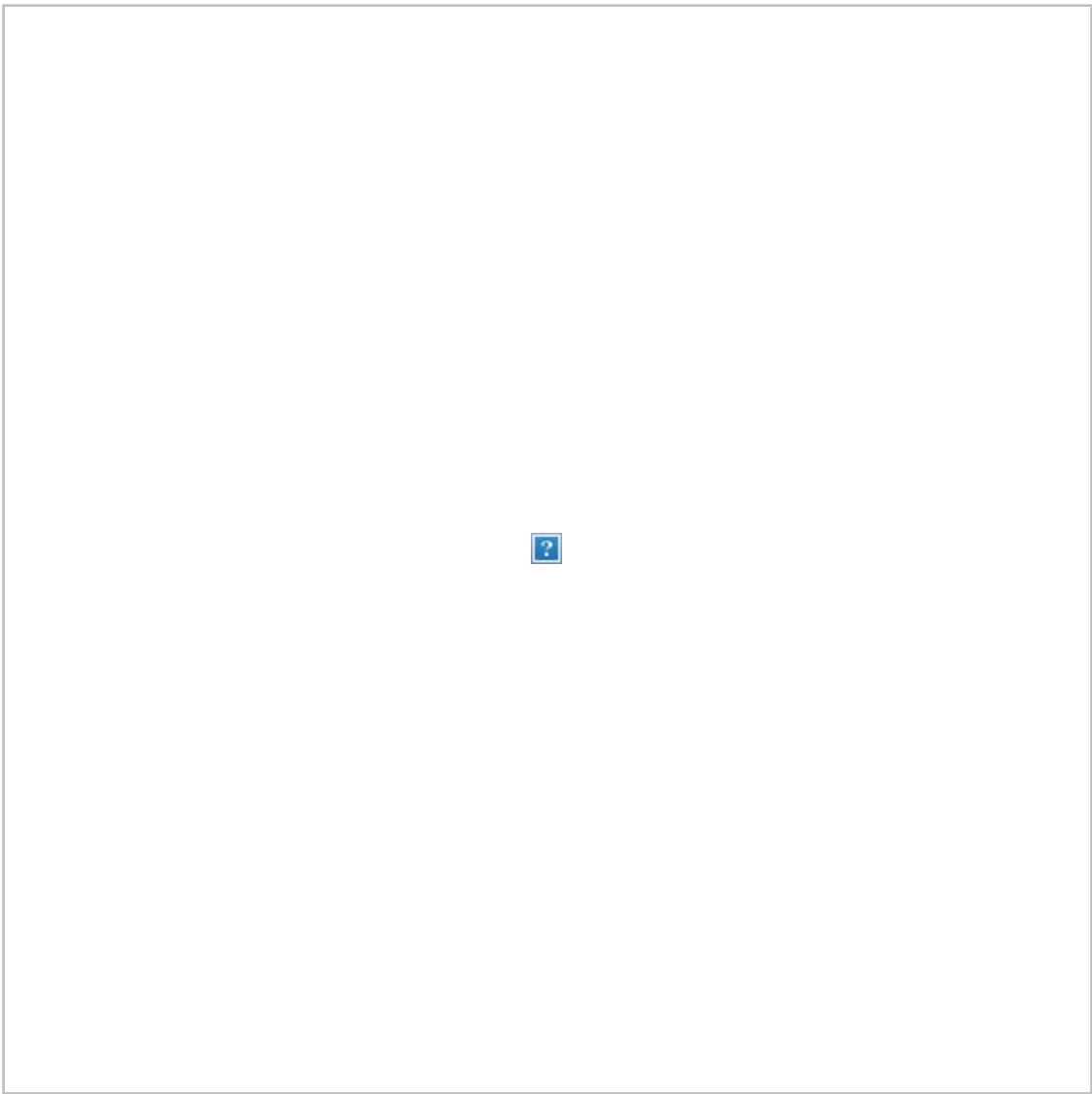
Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:



Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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[Anton Porter](#)

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The Daily 202: James Comey says he's more worried about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

Date:

Friday, April 12, 2019 11:08:45 AM

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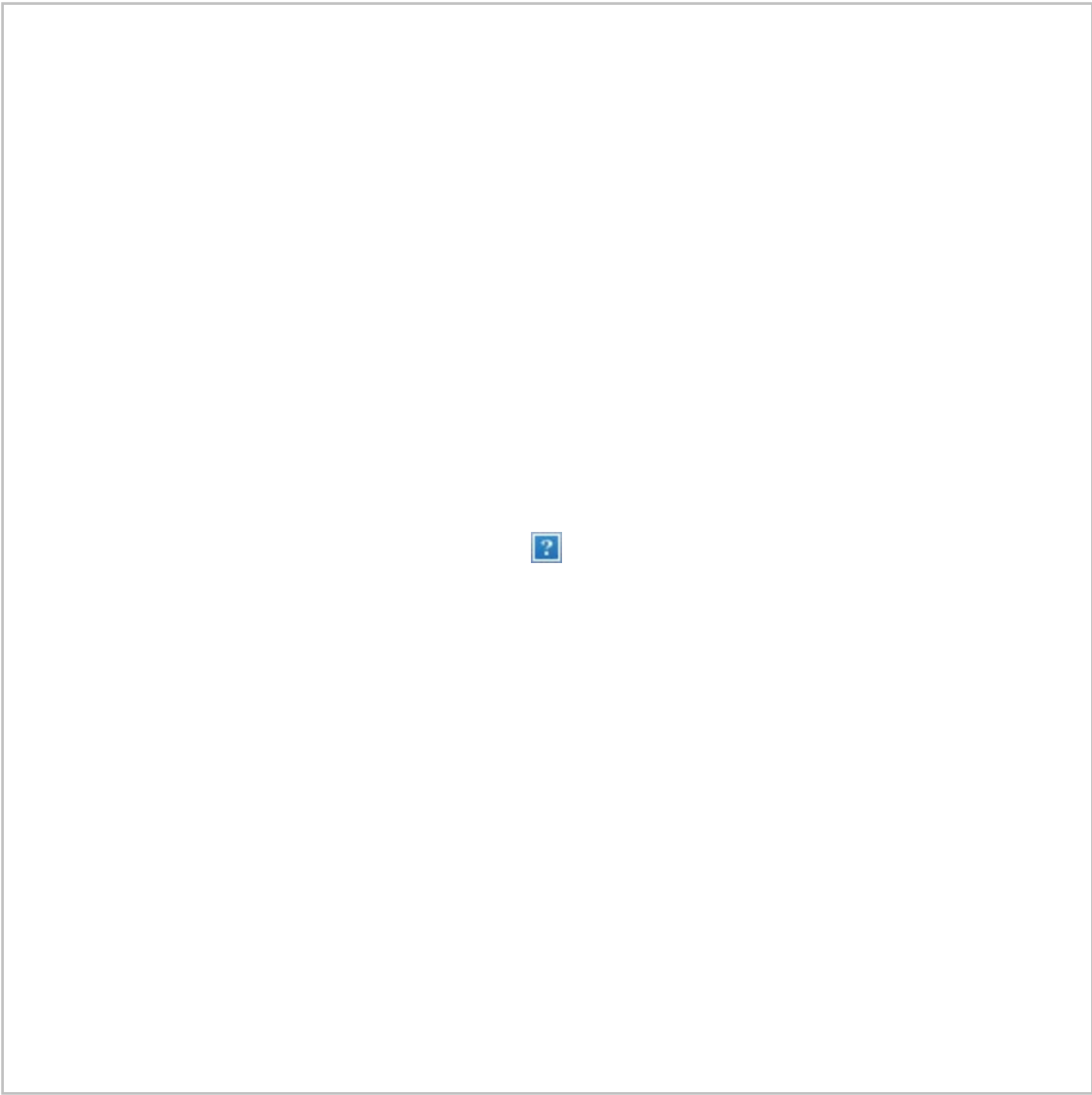
 Listen to The Big Idea



## James Comey says he's more worried



# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

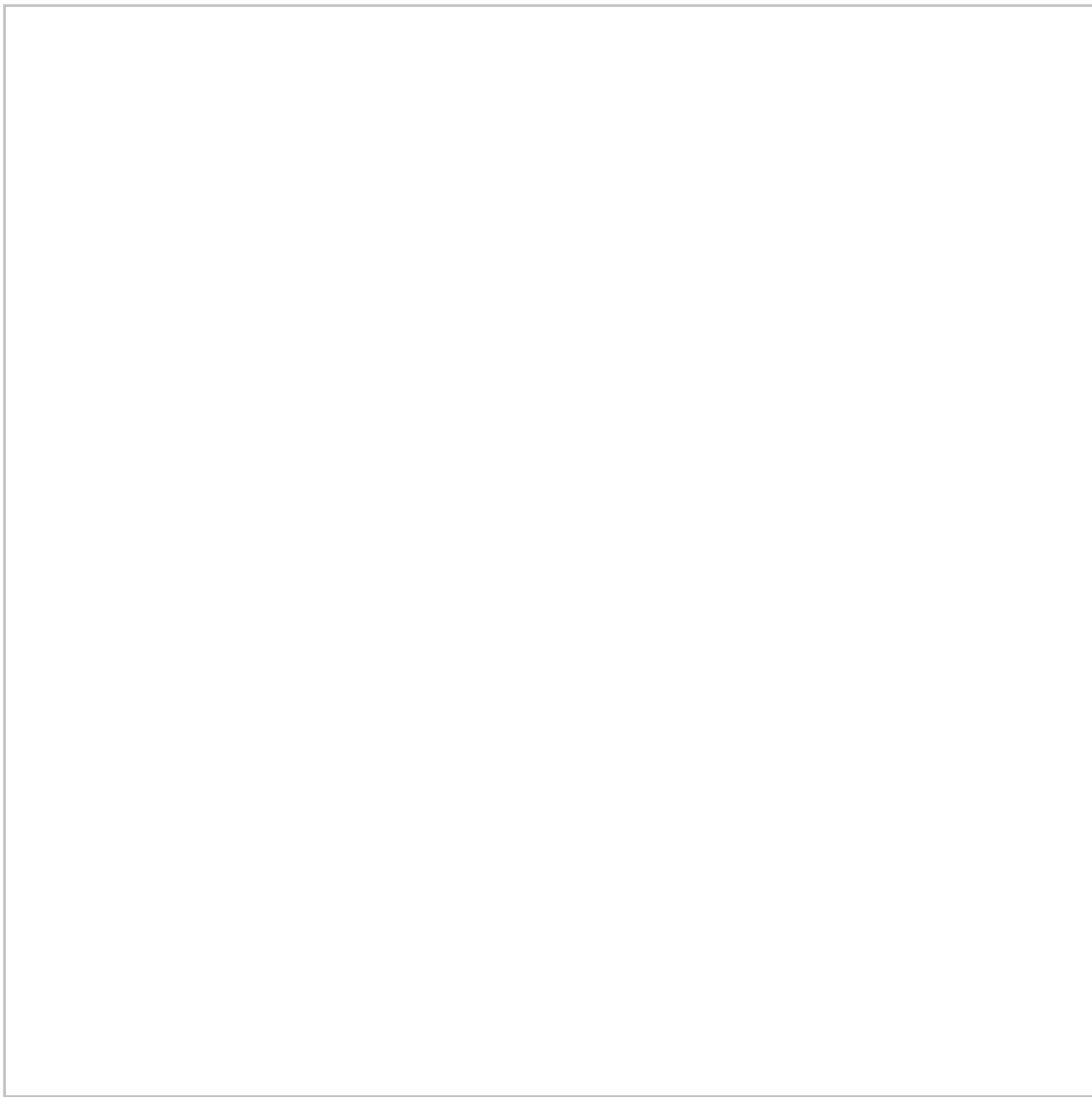
**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."



Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”





Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

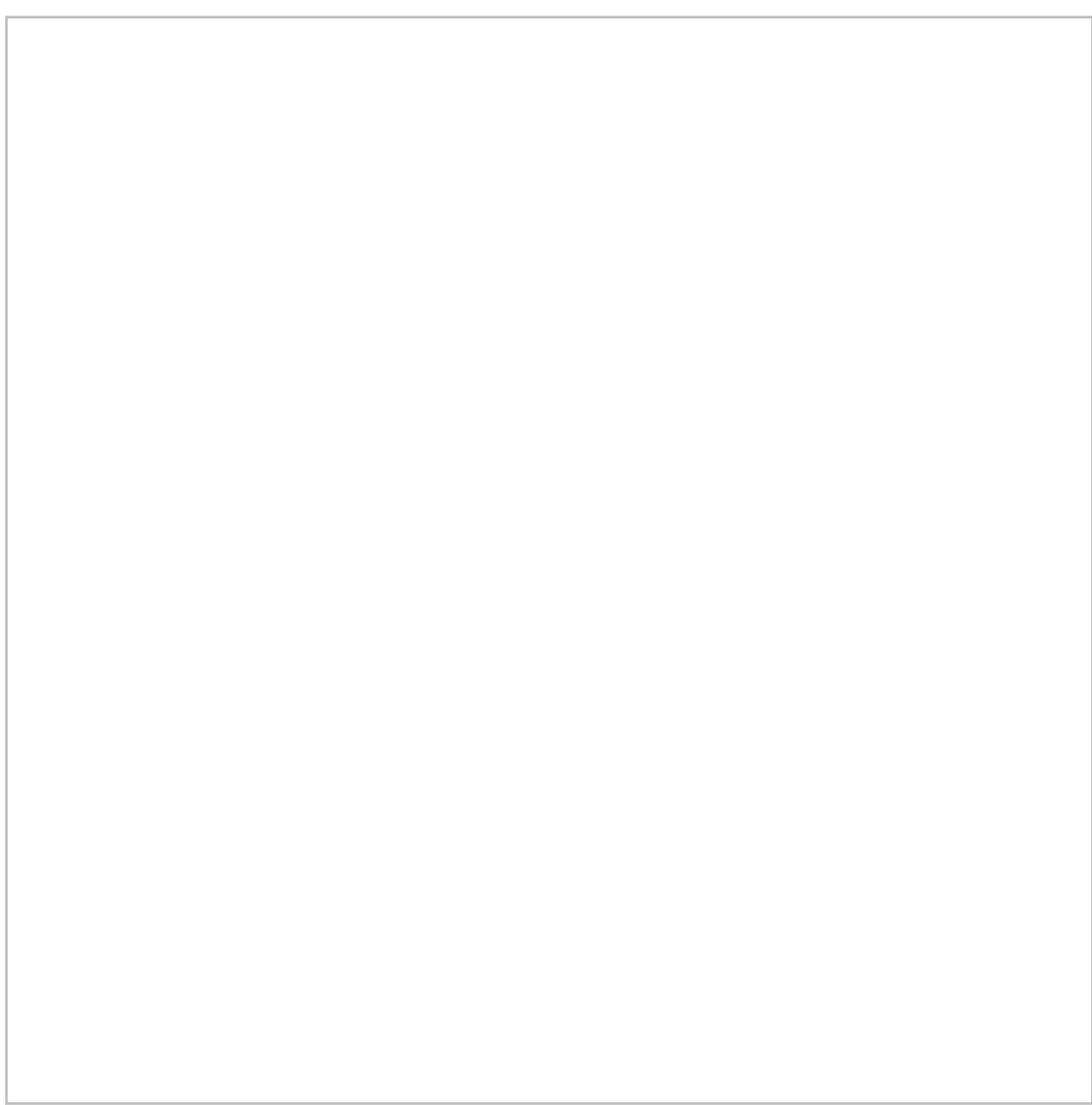
“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”



William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

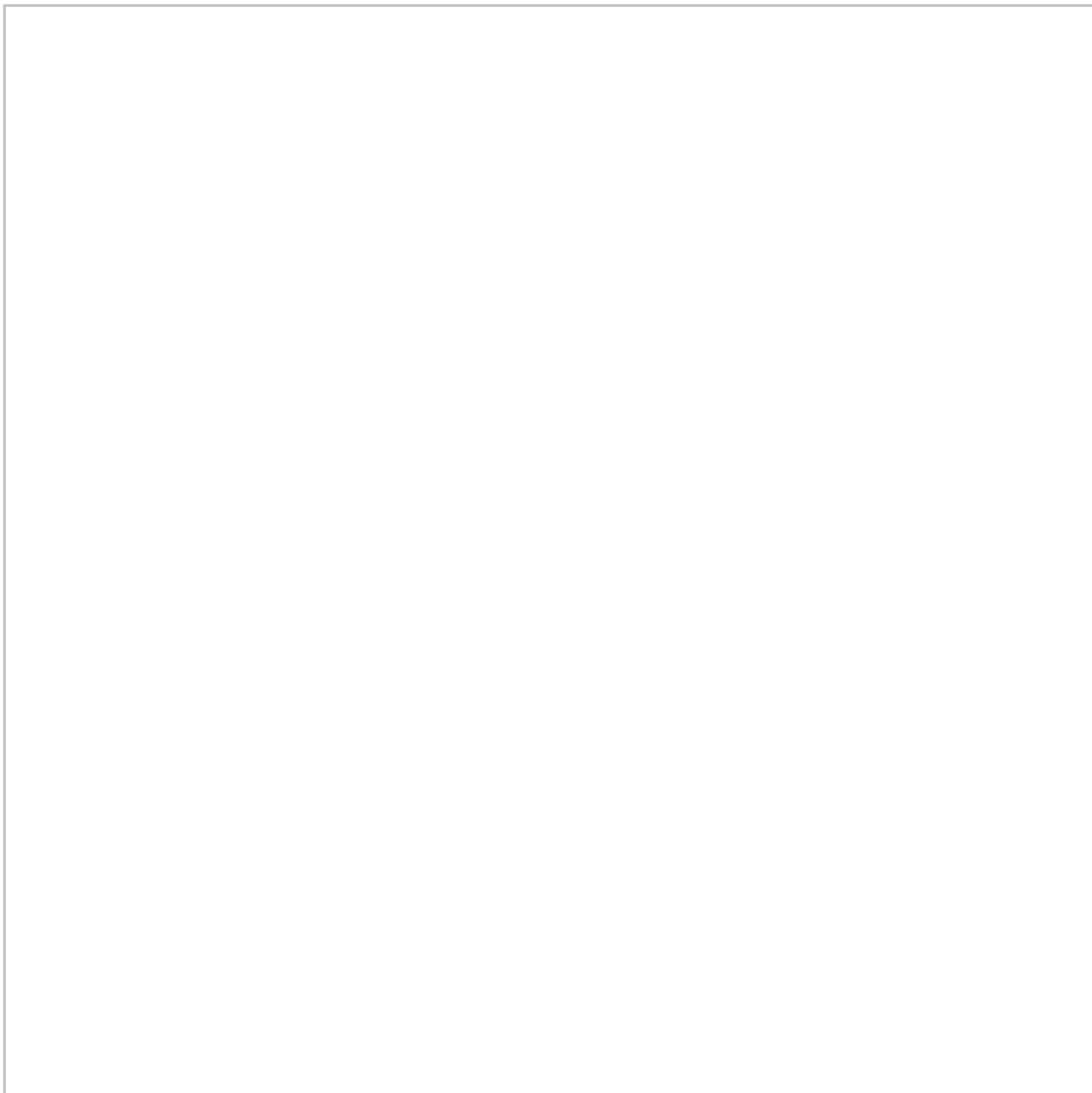
**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."



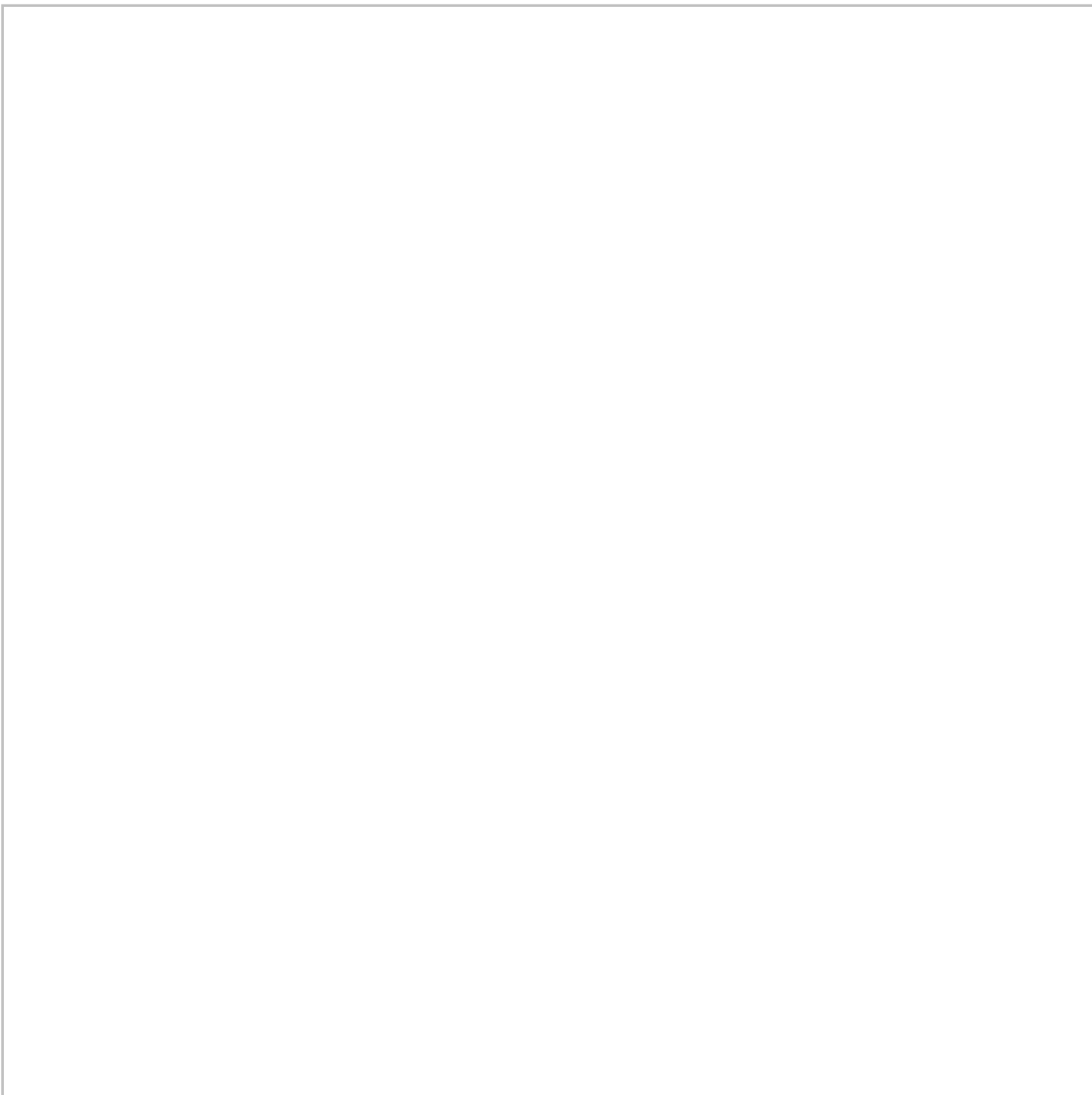


Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.



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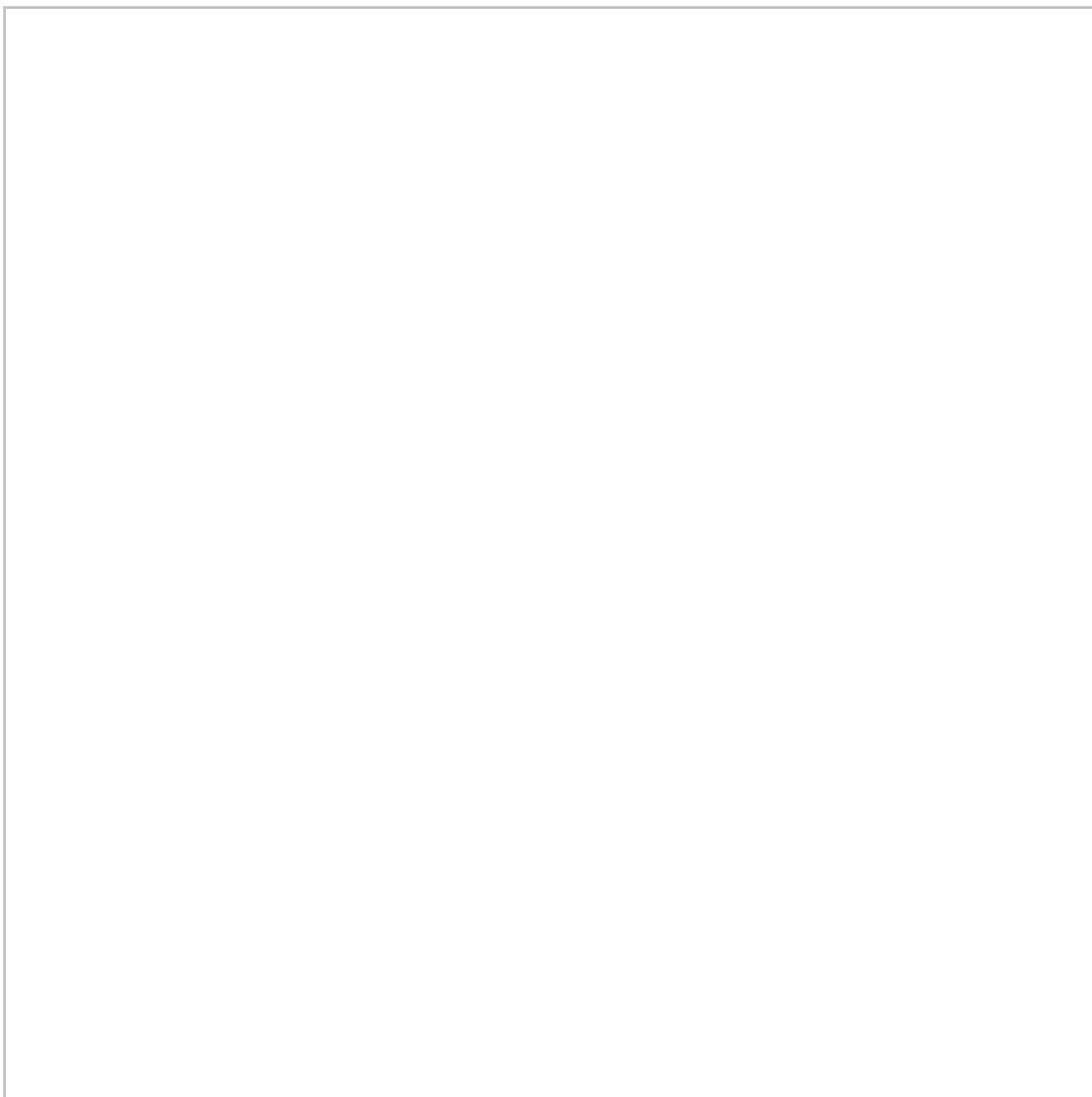
**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."

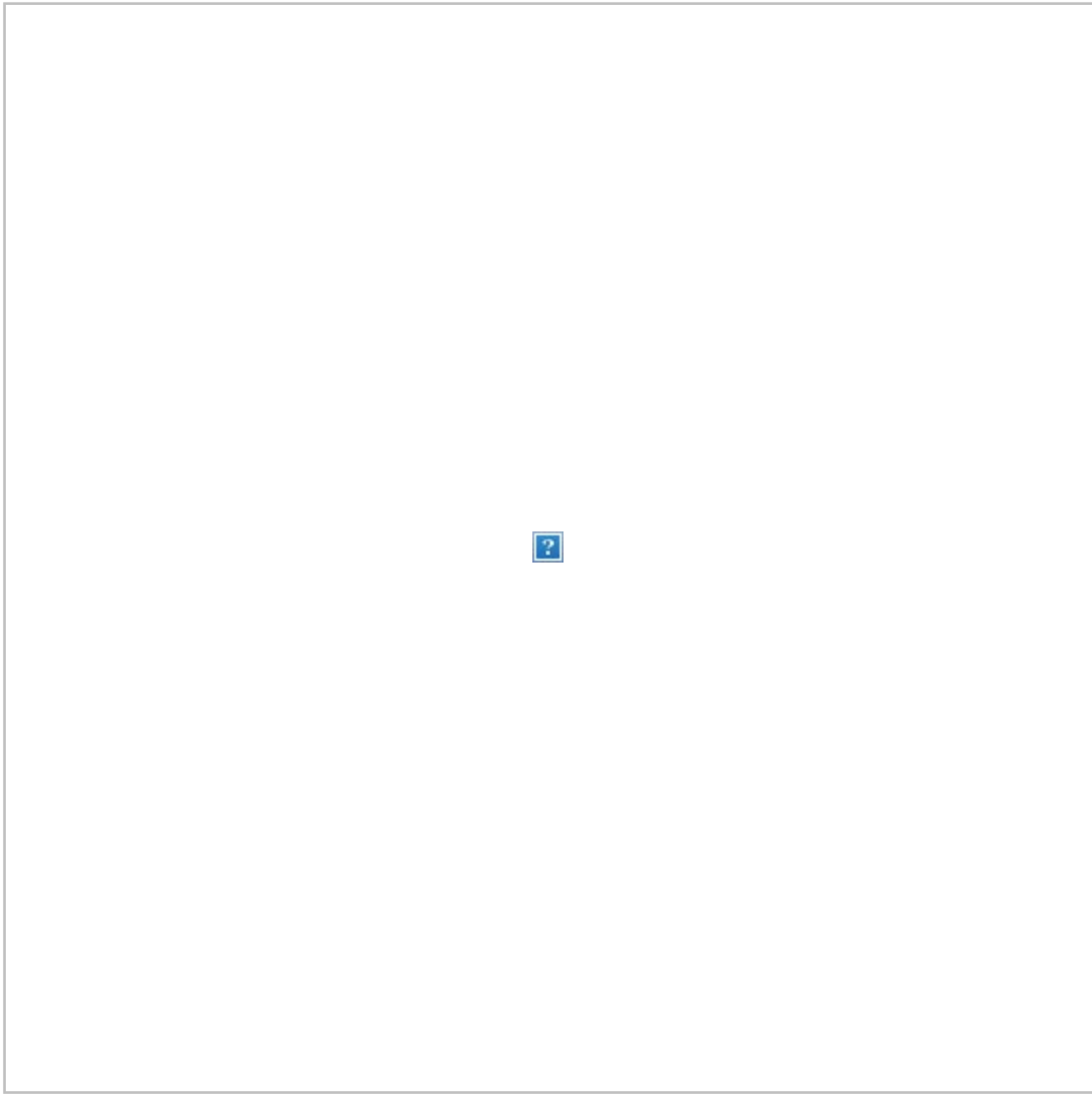


Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

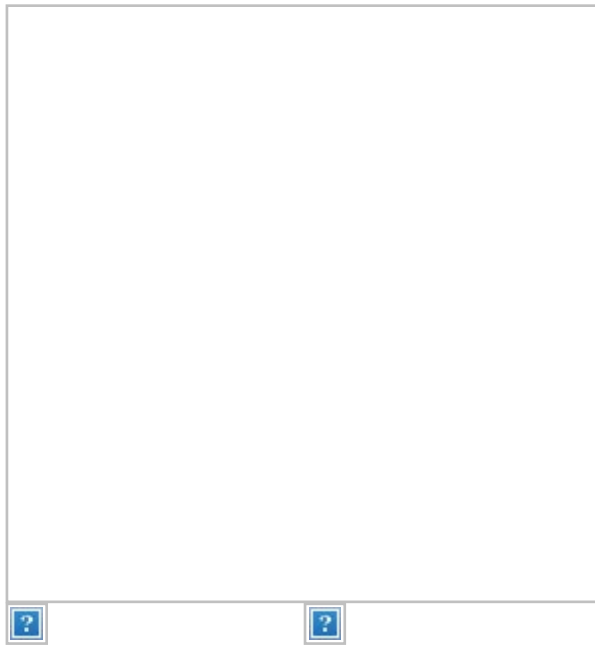
meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."



NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)





## GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**



— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation.** [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#): "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients.** [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#): "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will ‘fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.’ **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**”

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who’s accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he “really” misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel’s Anthony Man reports](#): “‘The worst part of this is being broke,’ he said. ... ‘I’ve lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I’m not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.’”

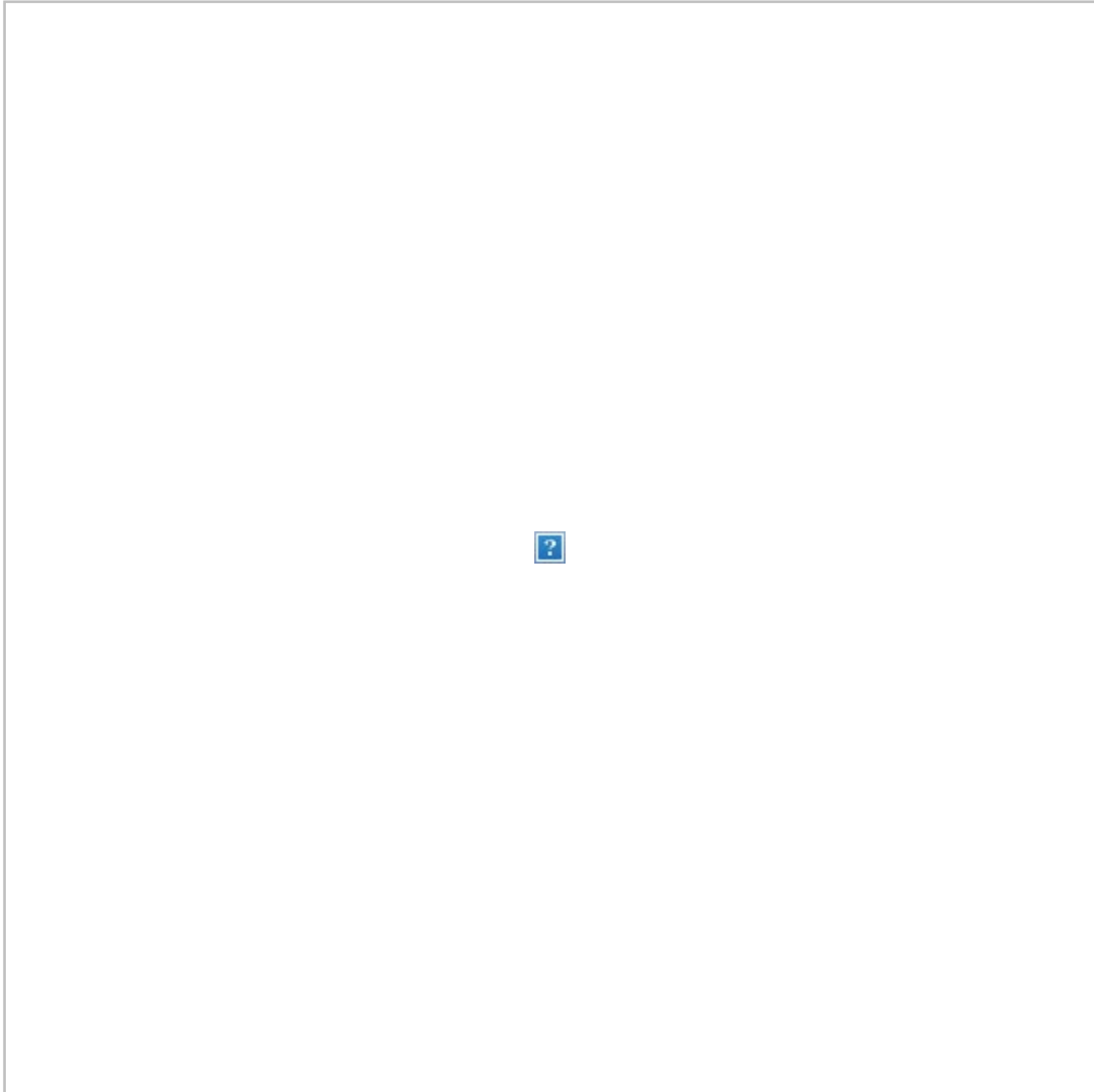
**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

“While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid.”

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** “My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation ‘the Sackler family’ — because of some family members’ association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**



**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report:](#) “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

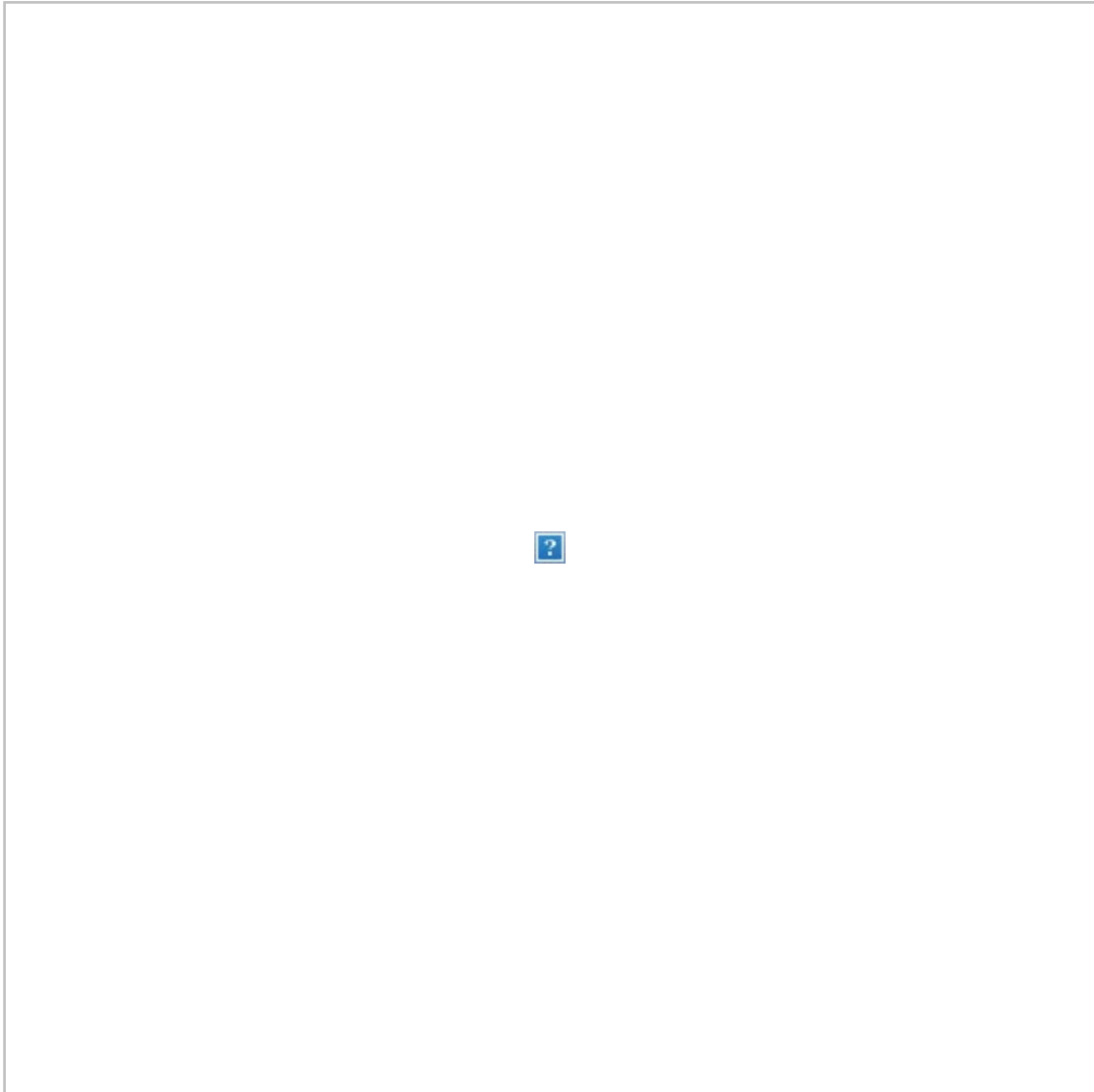
[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for



another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill.** [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#): "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia.** [Eli Rosenberg reports](#): "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

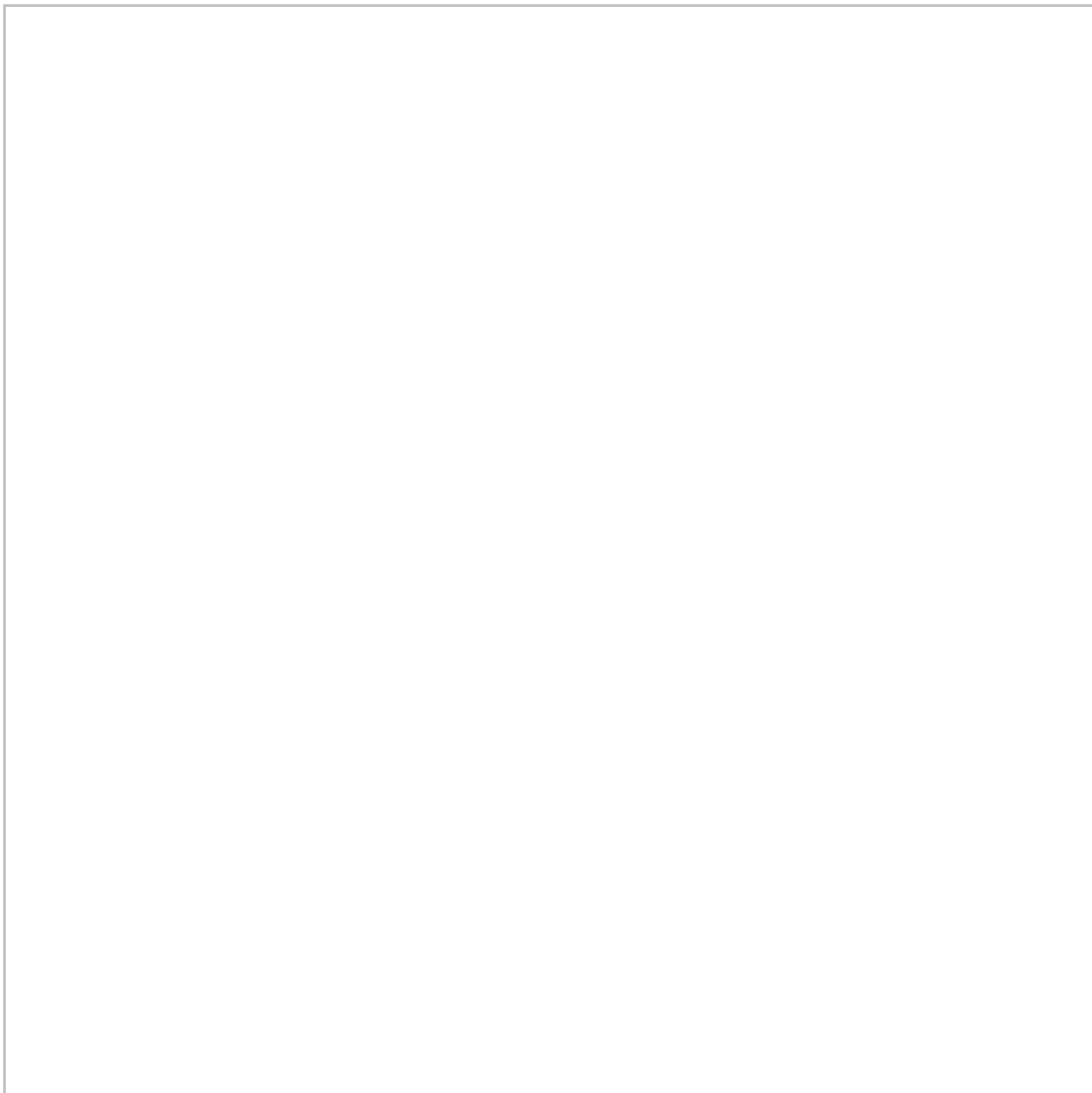
**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**



[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

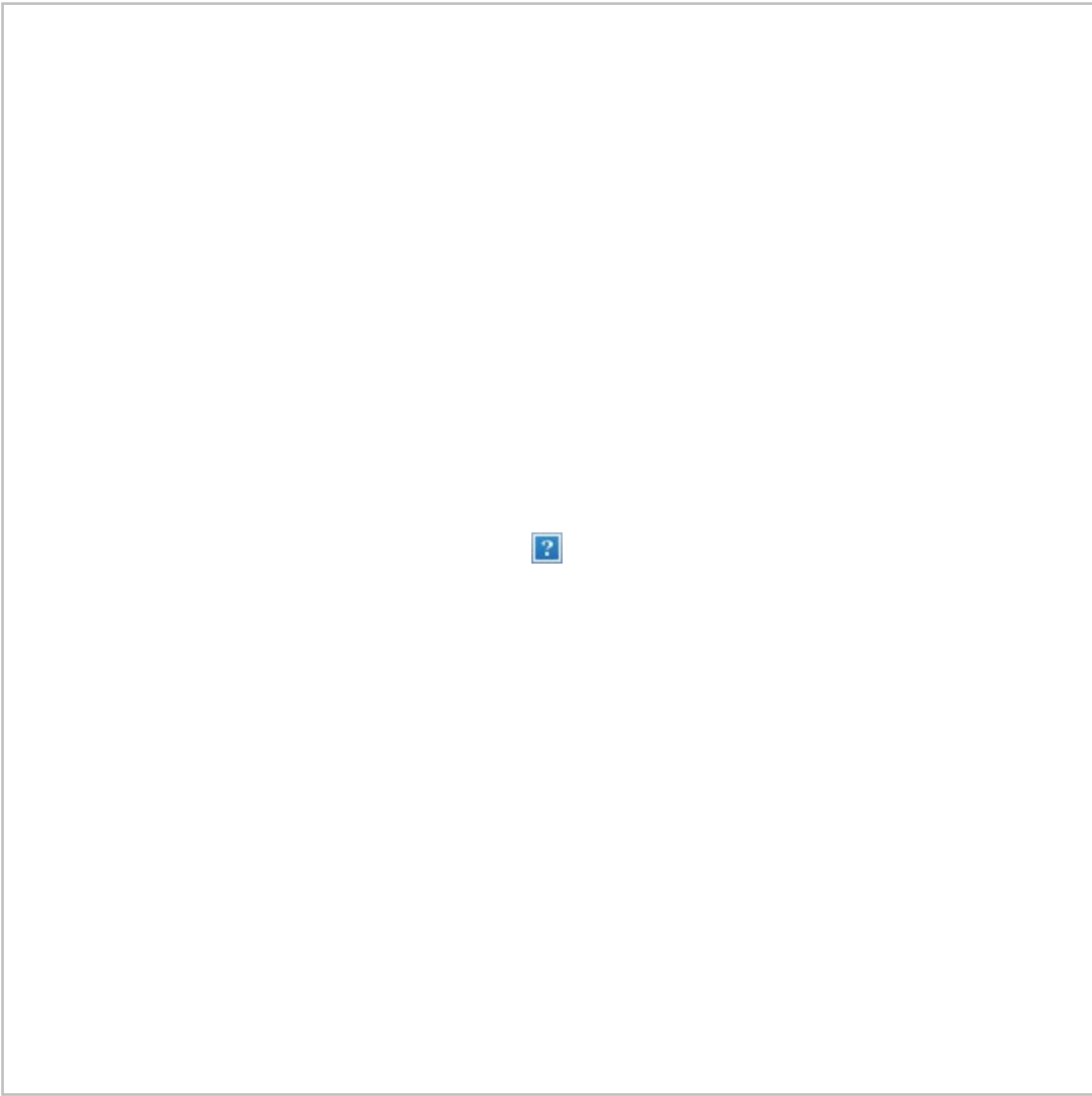
A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:



From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:



From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



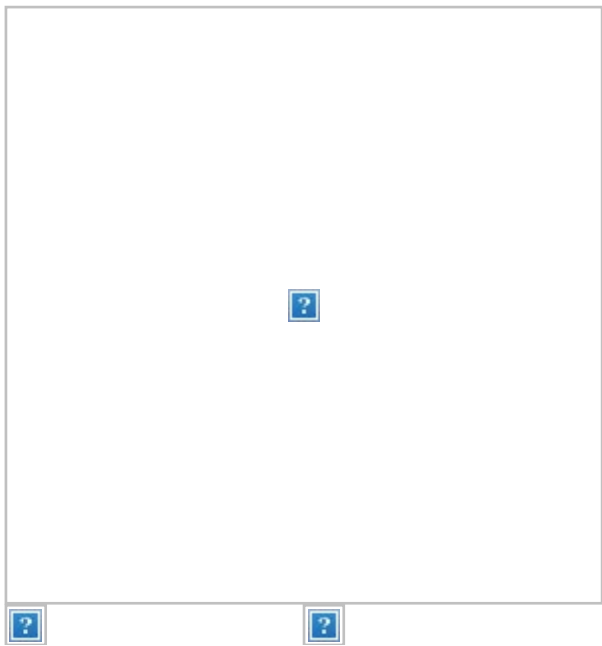
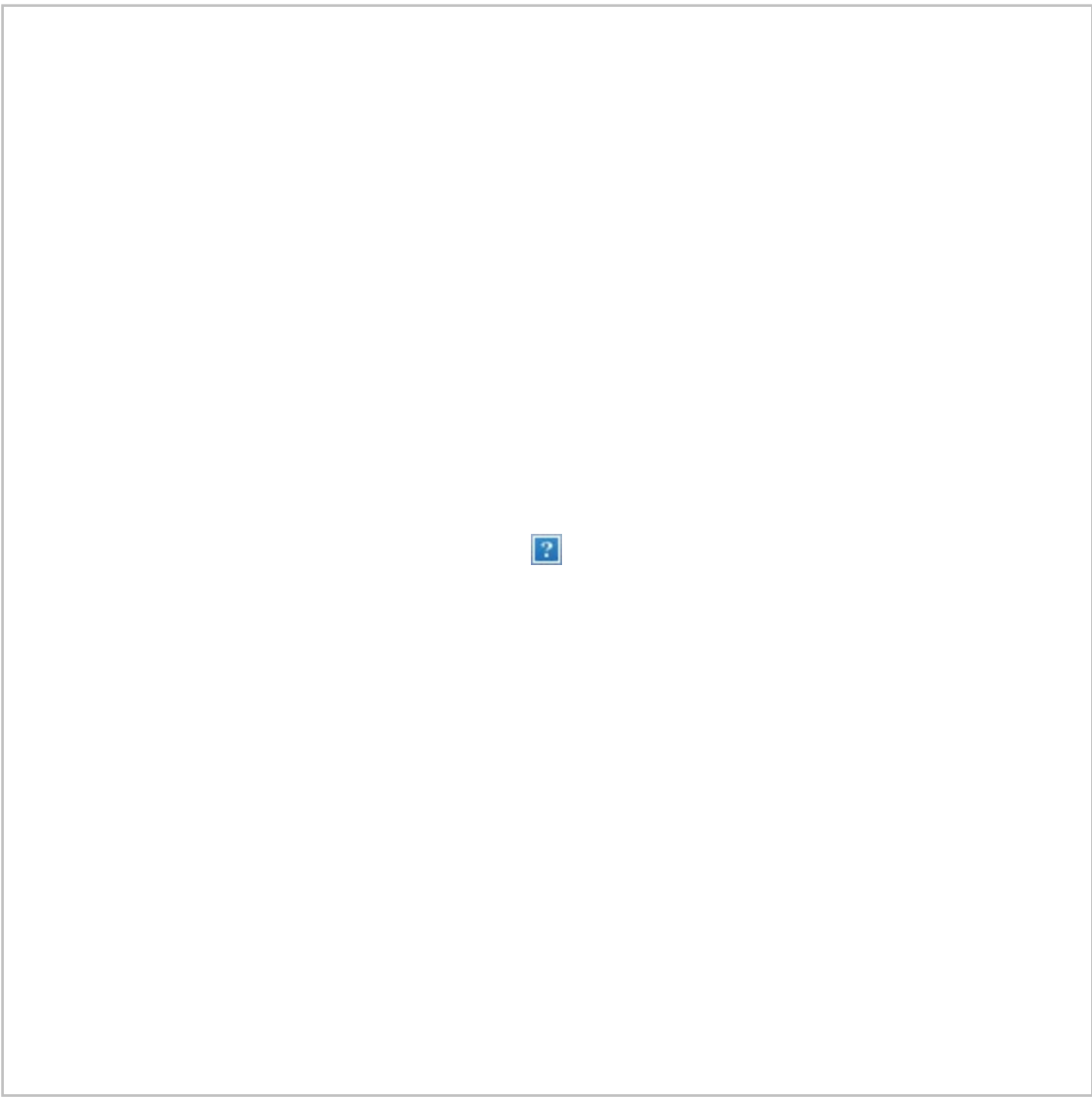
Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:



One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:



A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:



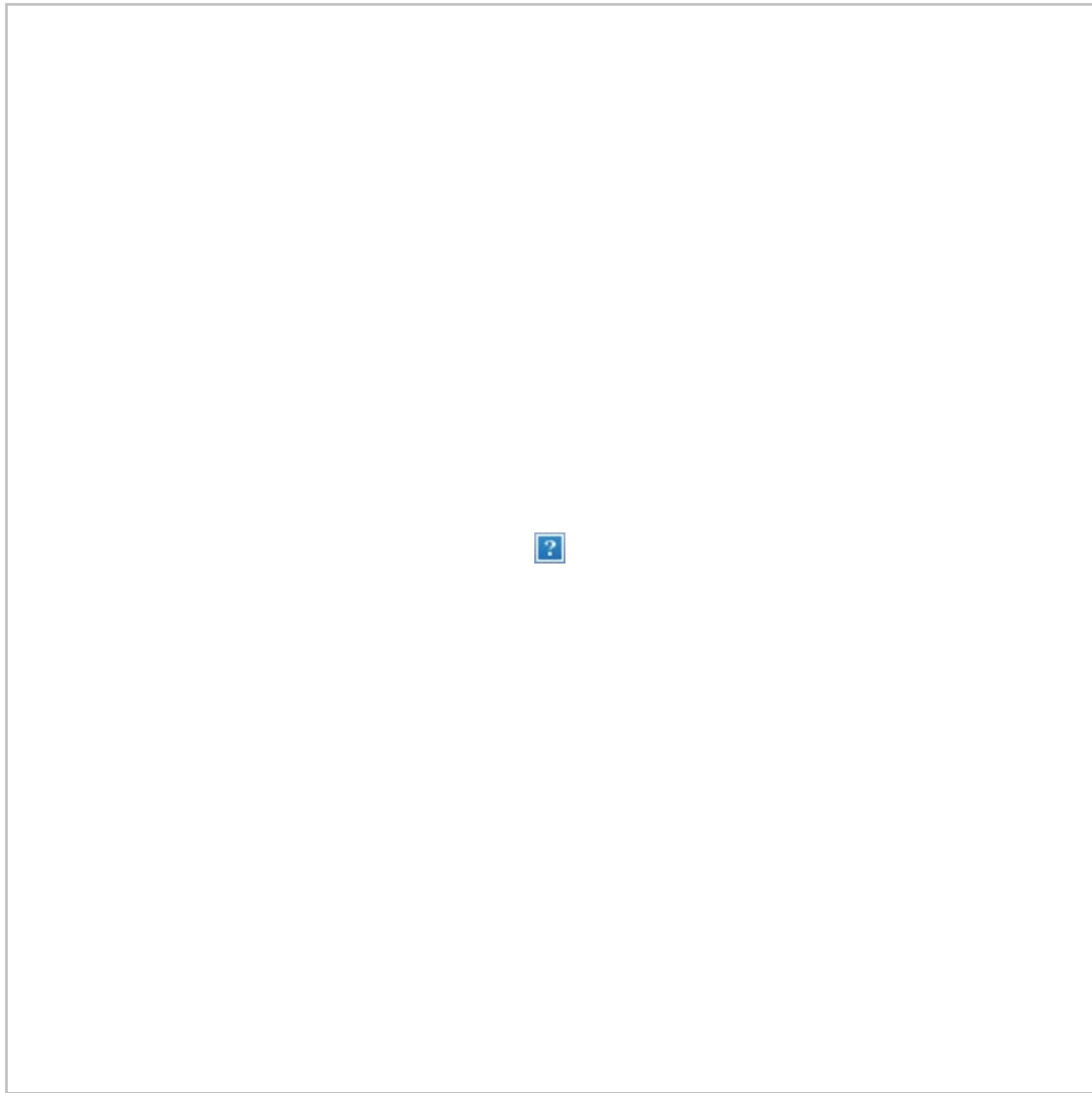
A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:



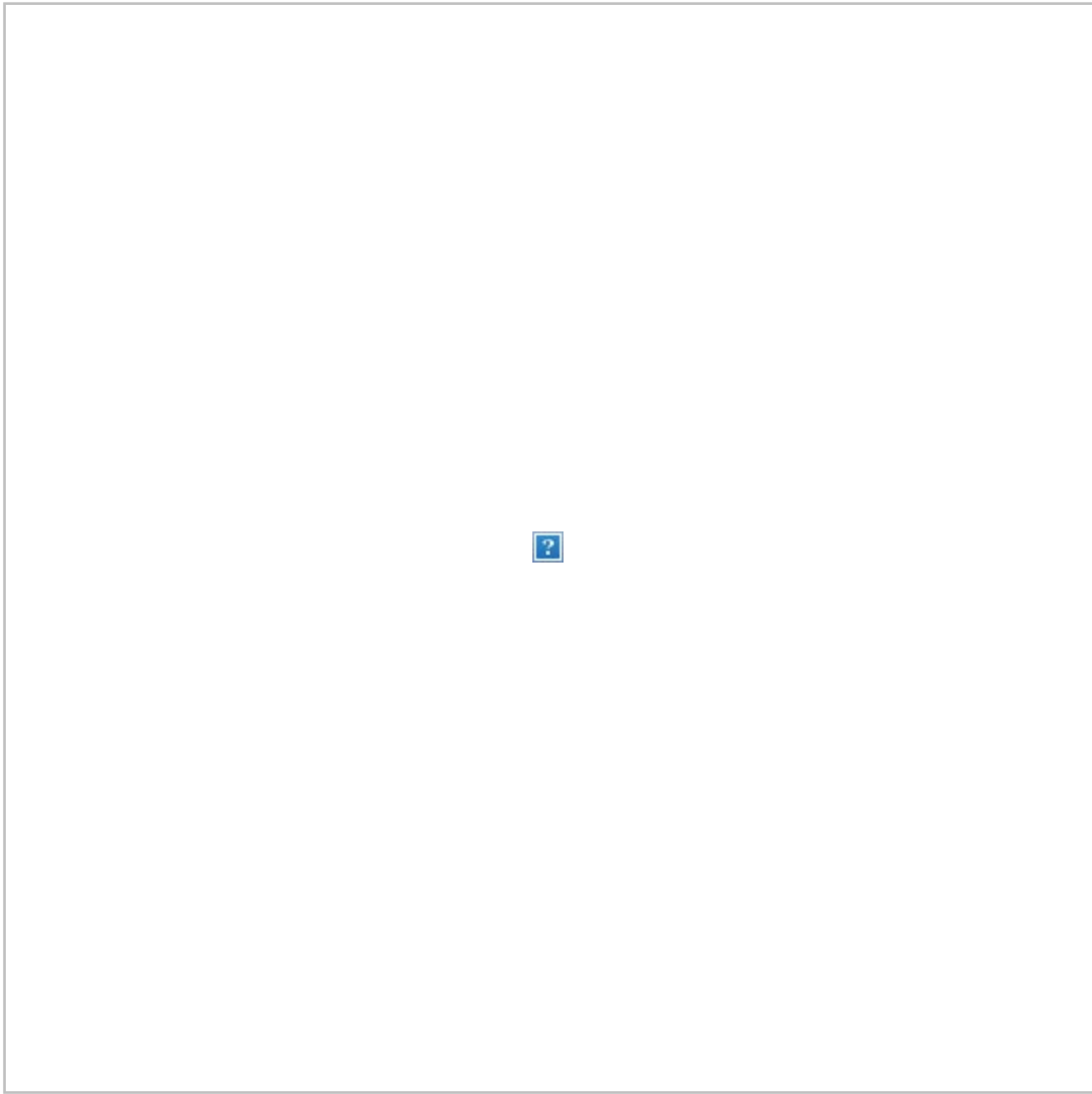
Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy



Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



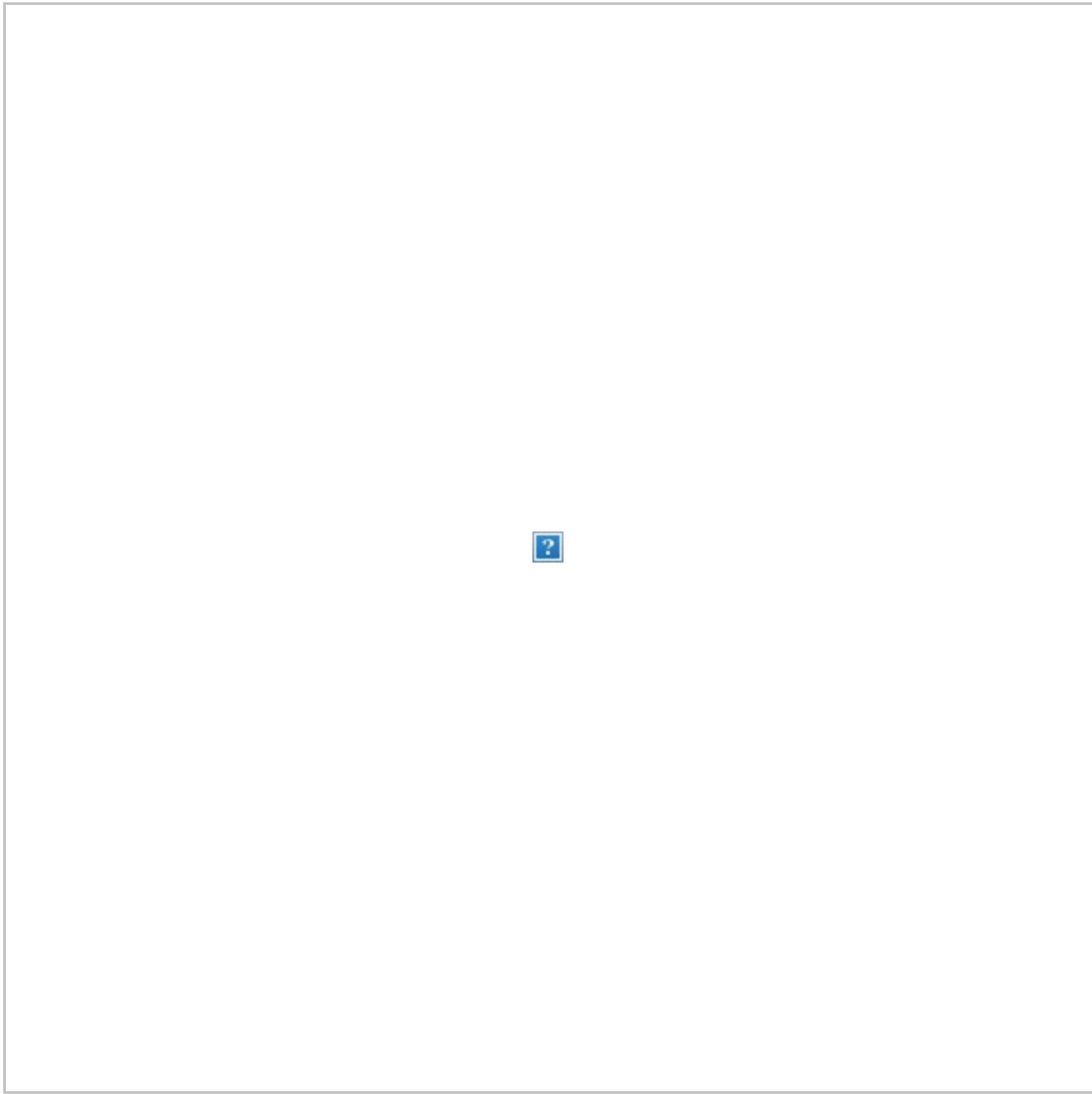
Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:



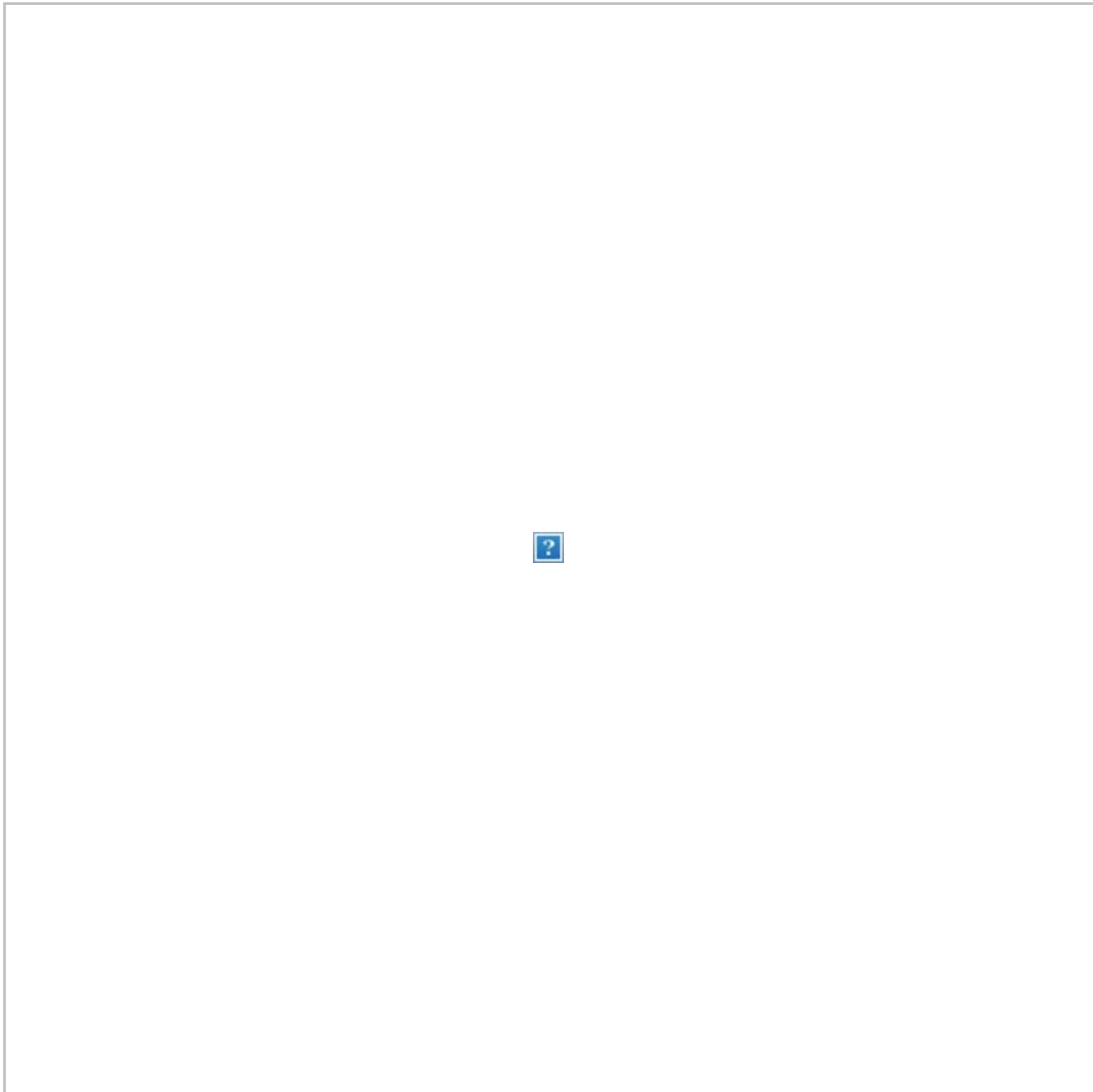
A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:



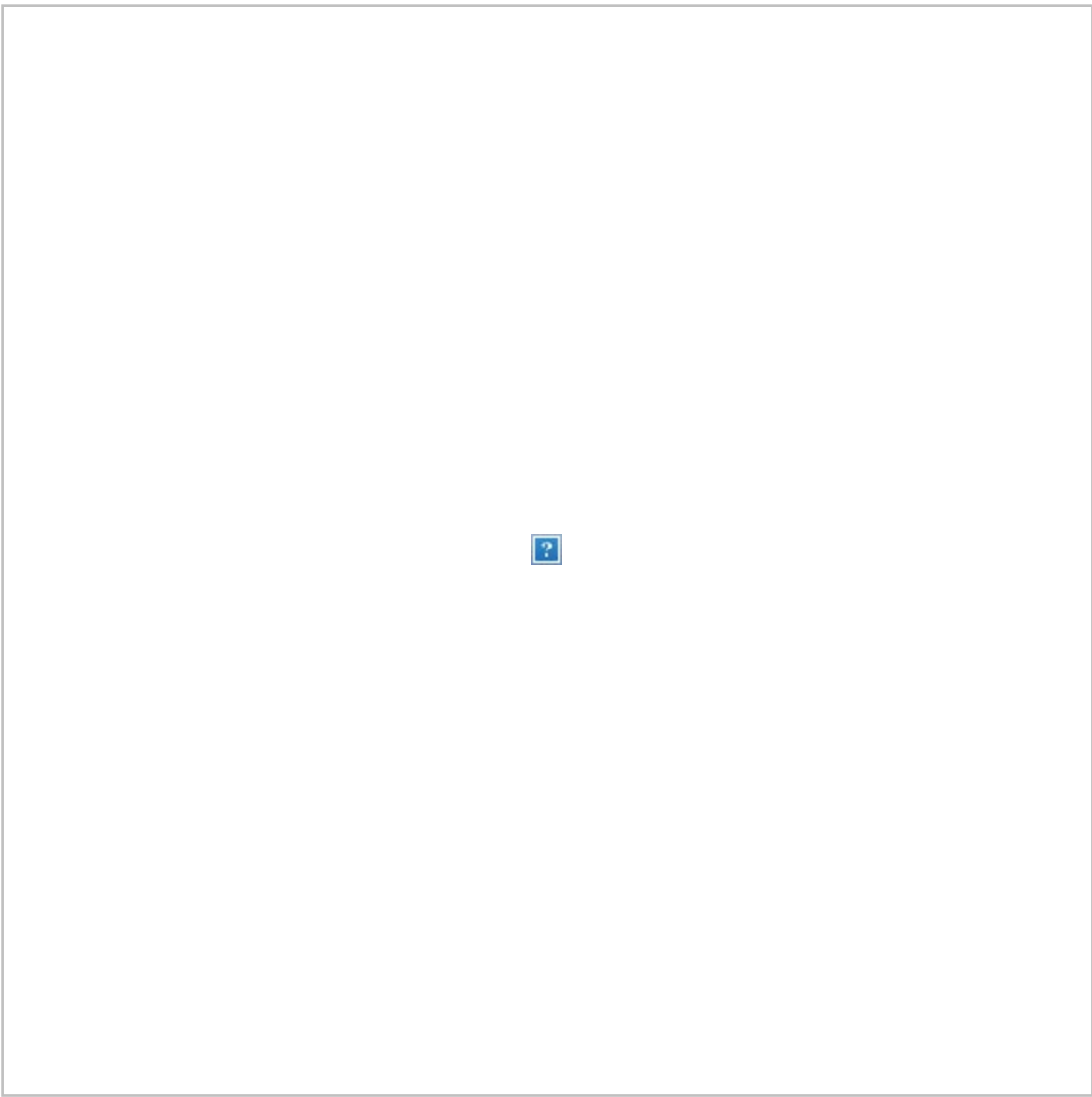
A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

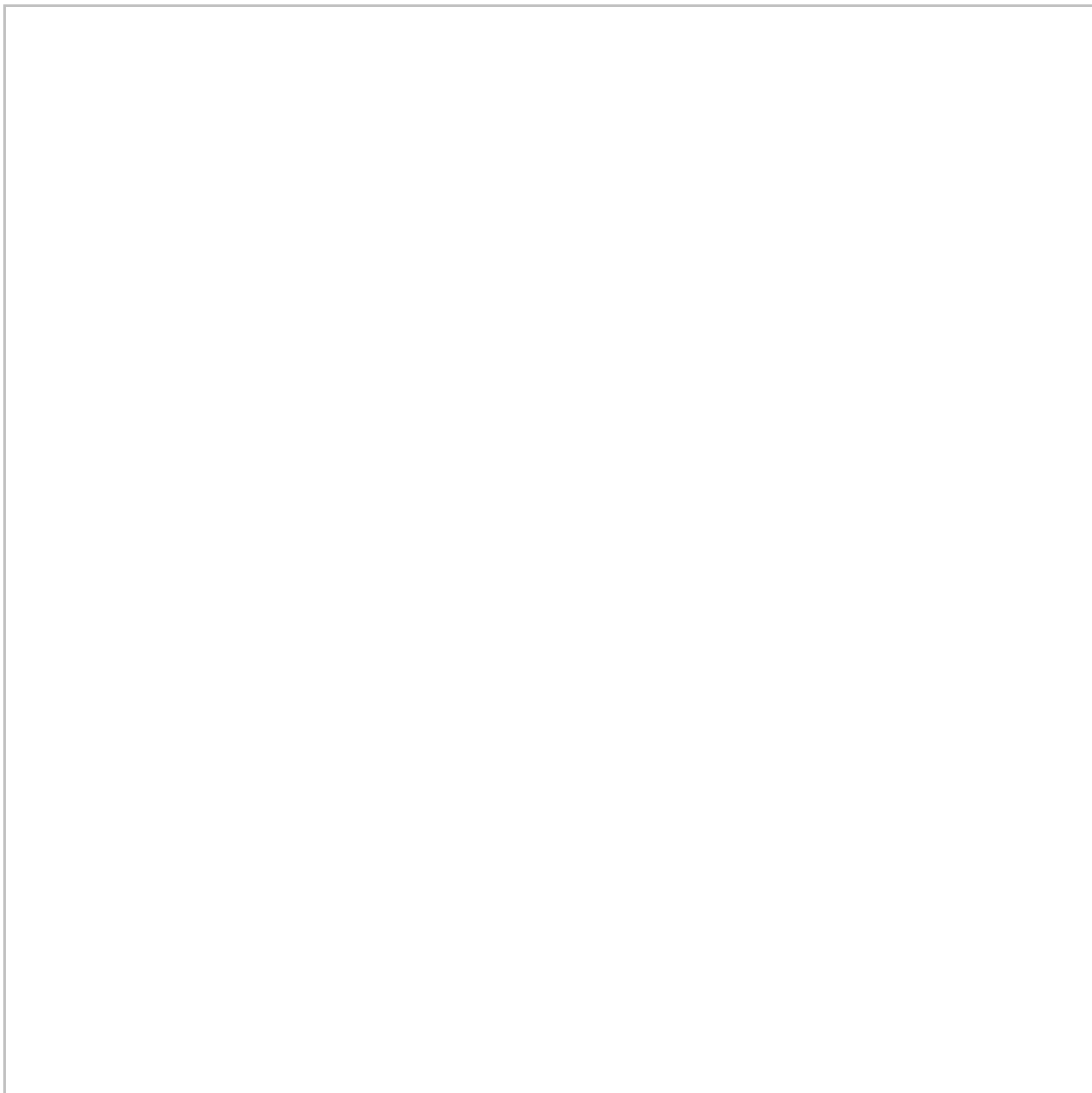


A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:



Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:



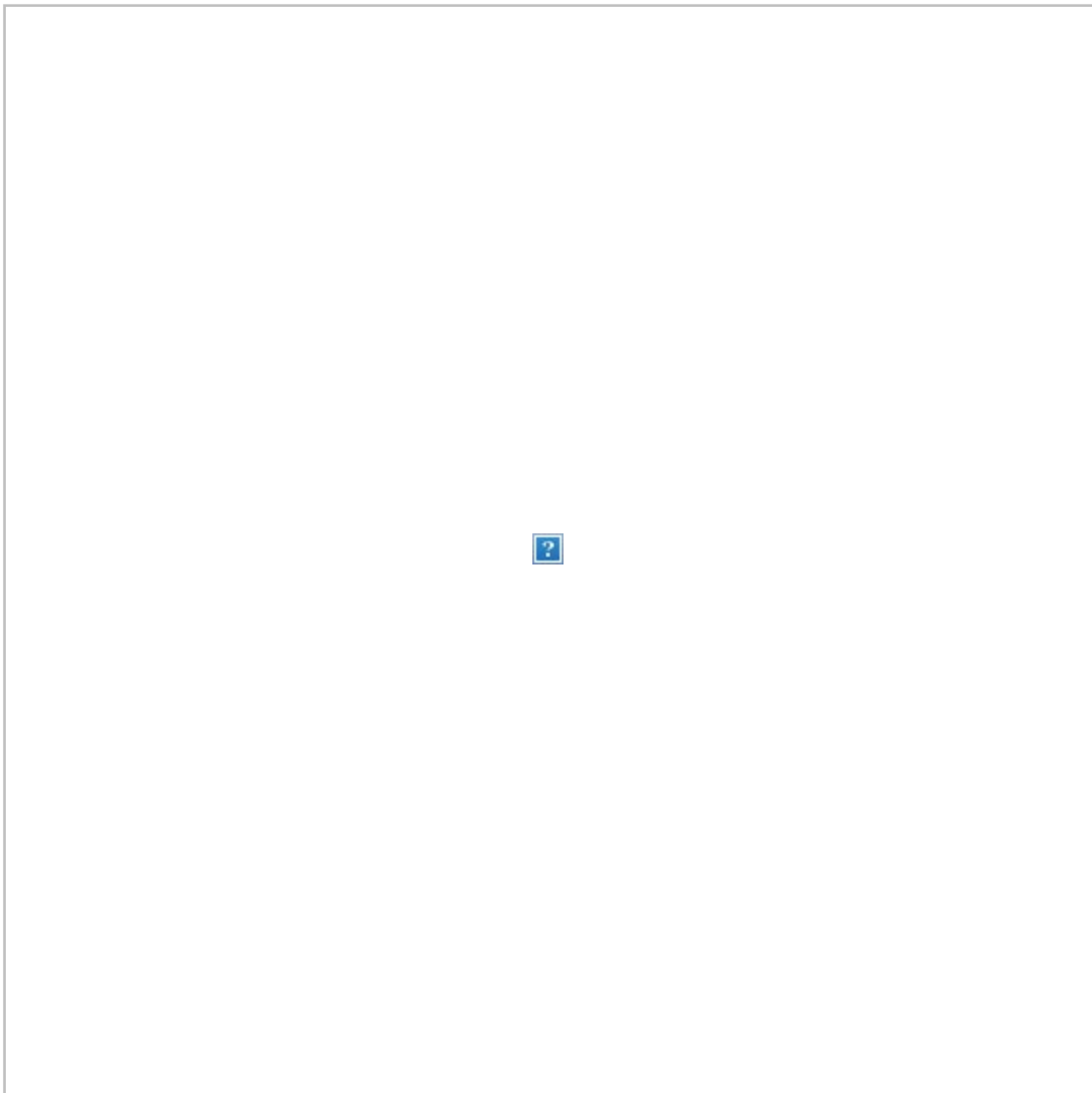


From a news writer for the journal Nature:

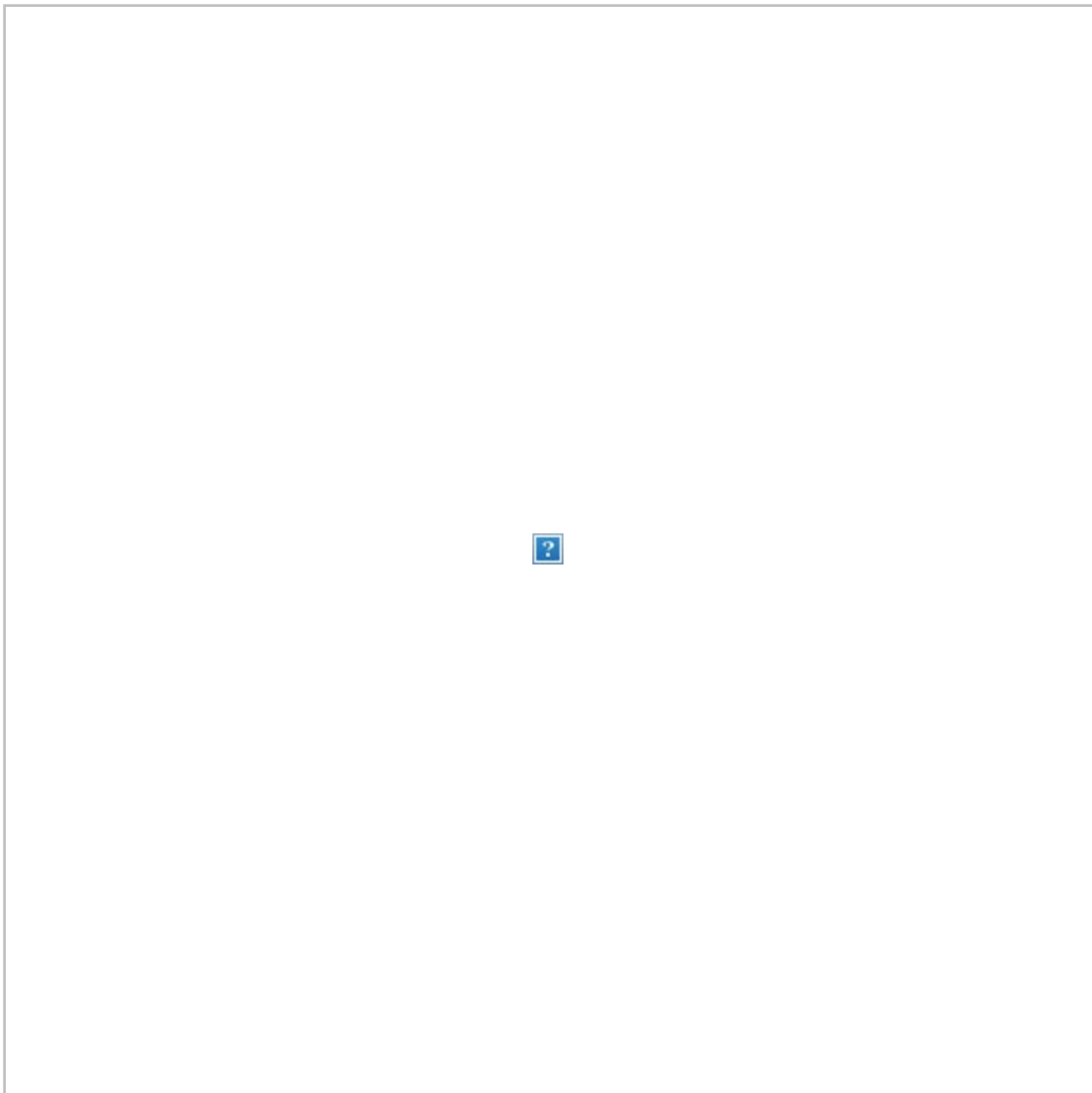


Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:





The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:



And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**



**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

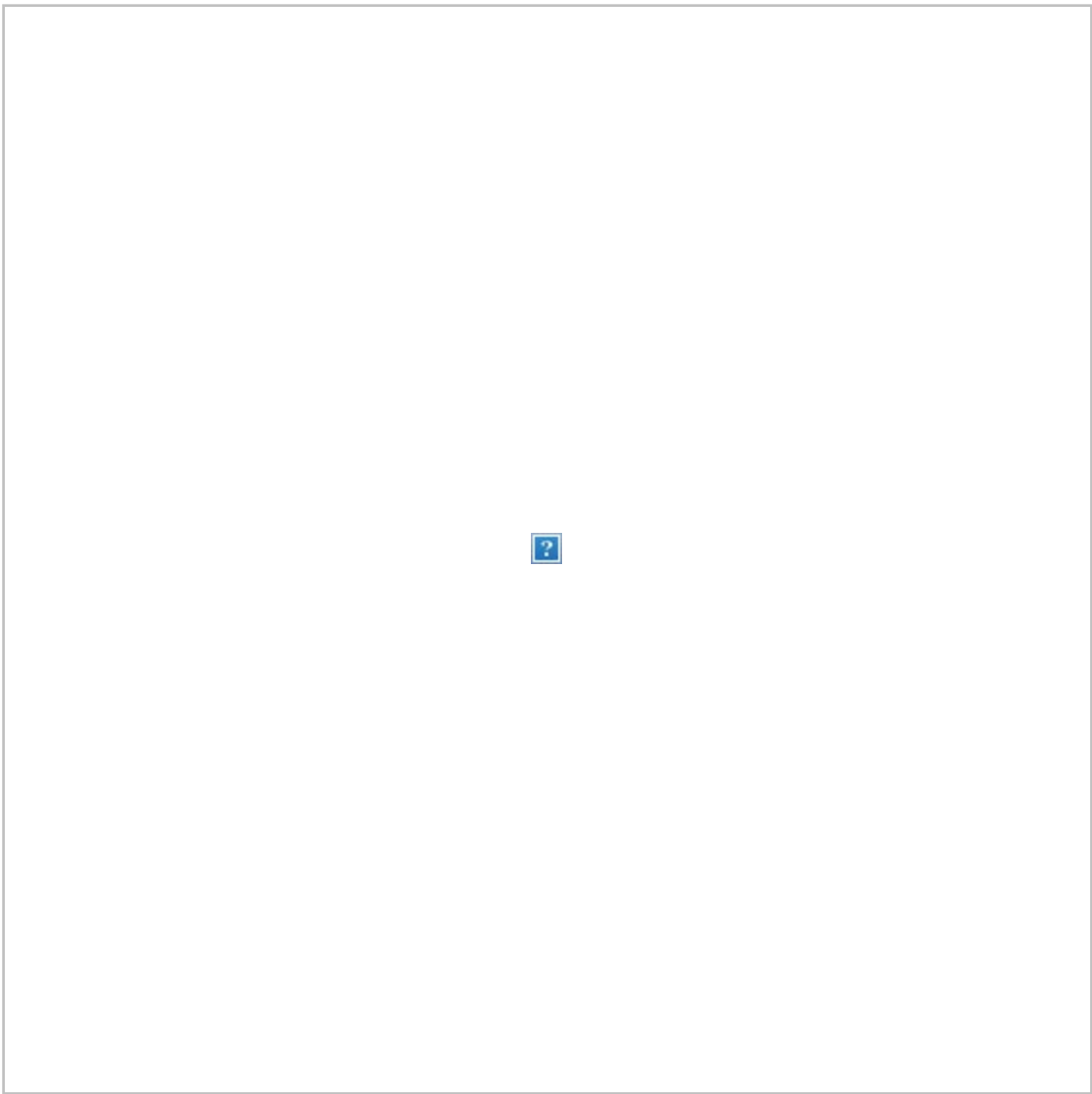
Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:



Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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Subject:

The Daily 202: James Comey says he's more worried about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

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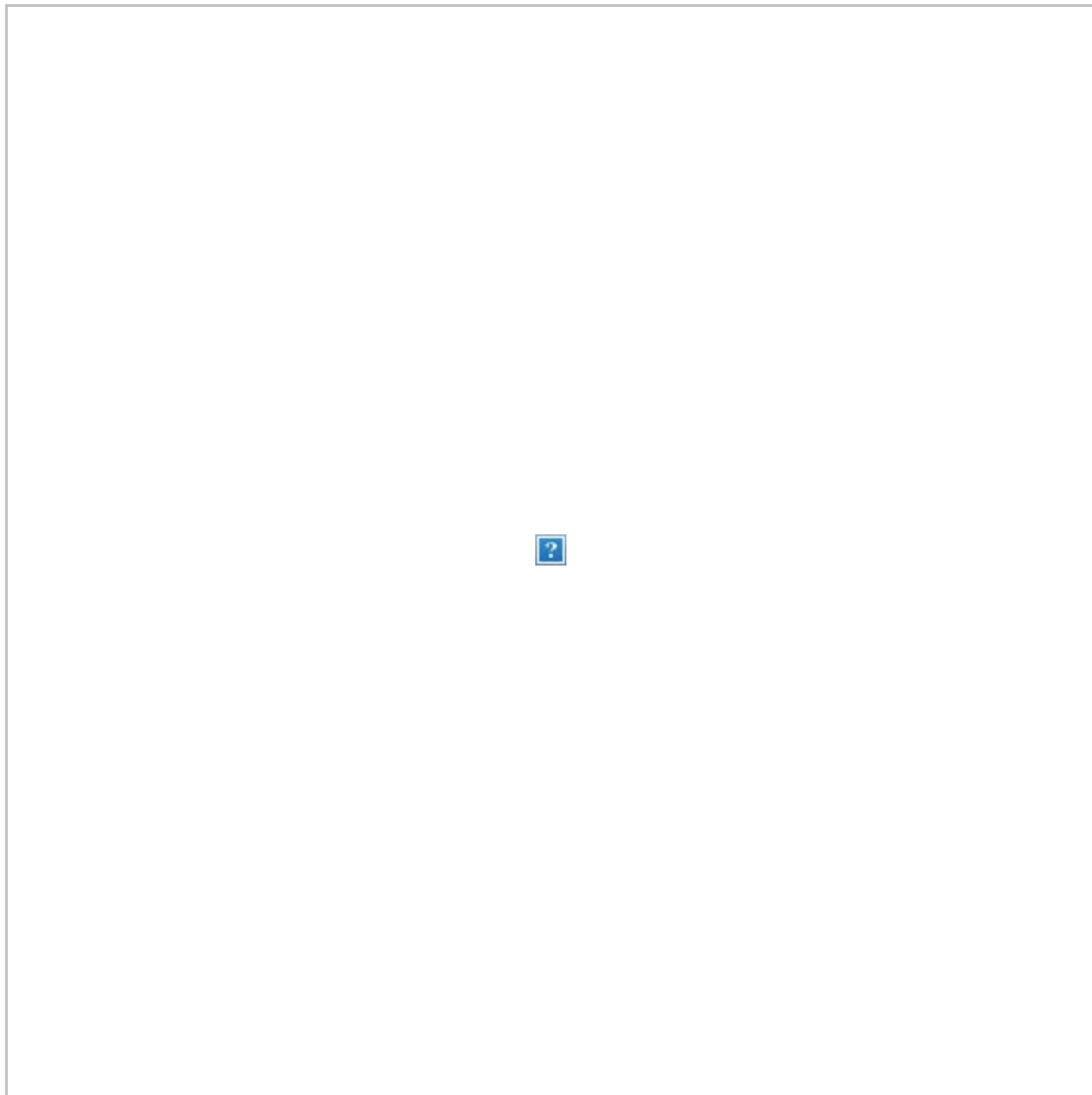


## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

DOCUMENT 30

Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**

*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

**THE BIG IDEA:**

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey**

DOCUMENT 30

Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)

**pushed back on Bill Barr's claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump's 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller's report.**

"I don't understand what the heck he's talking about," Comey said here on Thursday. "But when I hear that kind of language used, it's concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as 'spying.' The reason I'm interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called 'spying,' then wow. That's going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don't know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign."

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it's appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands. Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."

Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood*  
– to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at  
us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just  
wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders  
against the truth. It should be plural because the  
Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult  
life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt  
Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as  
U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and  
then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI  
director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still  
not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the  
Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States  
requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and  
understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I  
don't see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that  
it even happened. If you don't acknowledge that another  
nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing  
enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence  
is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”

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Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

DOCUMENT 30  
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**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



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Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches, they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”

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William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

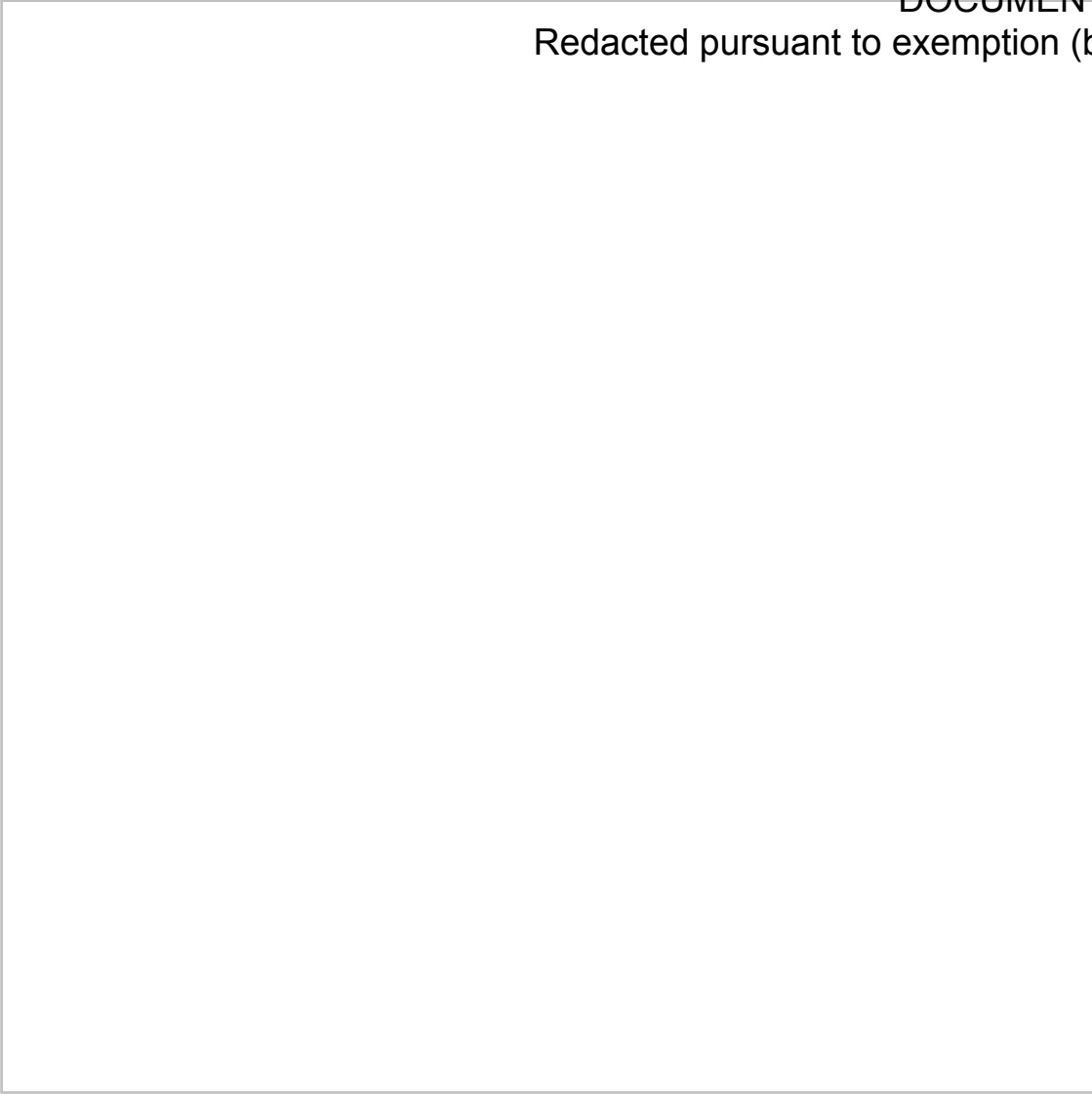
**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

DOCUMENT 30  
he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead  
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people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein  
said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

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Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually, something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently."

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. "Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?" Comey asked.

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**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



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W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."

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Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president.

During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

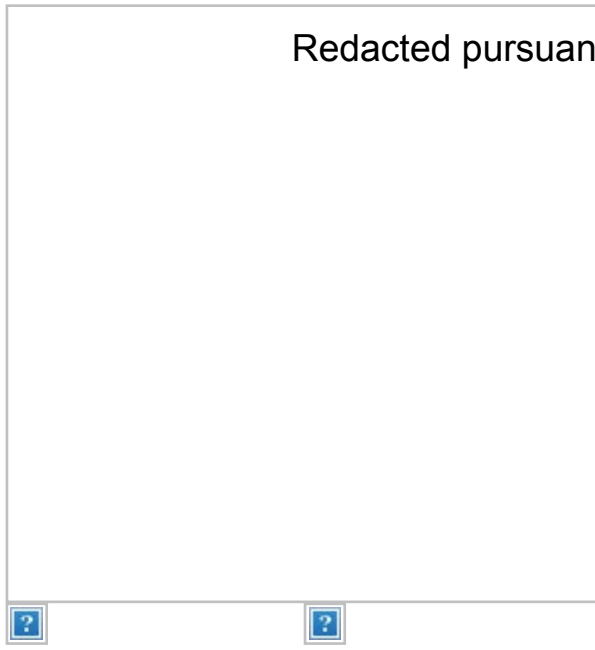
- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."

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NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)

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### GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **"Rick" Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



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Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

DOCUMENT 30  
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in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents.  
The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First

Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador's decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country's political shift away from its former leftist leader. [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):**

**[Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#):** “By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange's arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton's campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

DOCUMENT 30  
tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events, in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))  
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**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.



federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)

Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation.** [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom](#)

[Hamburger report](#): "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients.**

[Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#):

"The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will 'fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.' **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike**, the sports apparel behemoth."

-- **Carl Kline, the former White House official who's accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

-- **Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he "really" misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel's Anthony Man reports](#): "'The worst part of this is being broke,' he said. ... 'I've lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I'm not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.'"

-- **Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer.**

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**The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

"While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh](#)

[Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain’s appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain’s pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat."

-- **Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire



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evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**

Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack. Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."

Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate. It's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets:  
Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)  
from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”



**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. <sup>DOCUMENT 30</sup> Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.” <sup>Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)</sup>

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight'. Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6) indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."



## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill.** [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#): "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia.** [Eli Rosenberg reports](#): "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

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amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

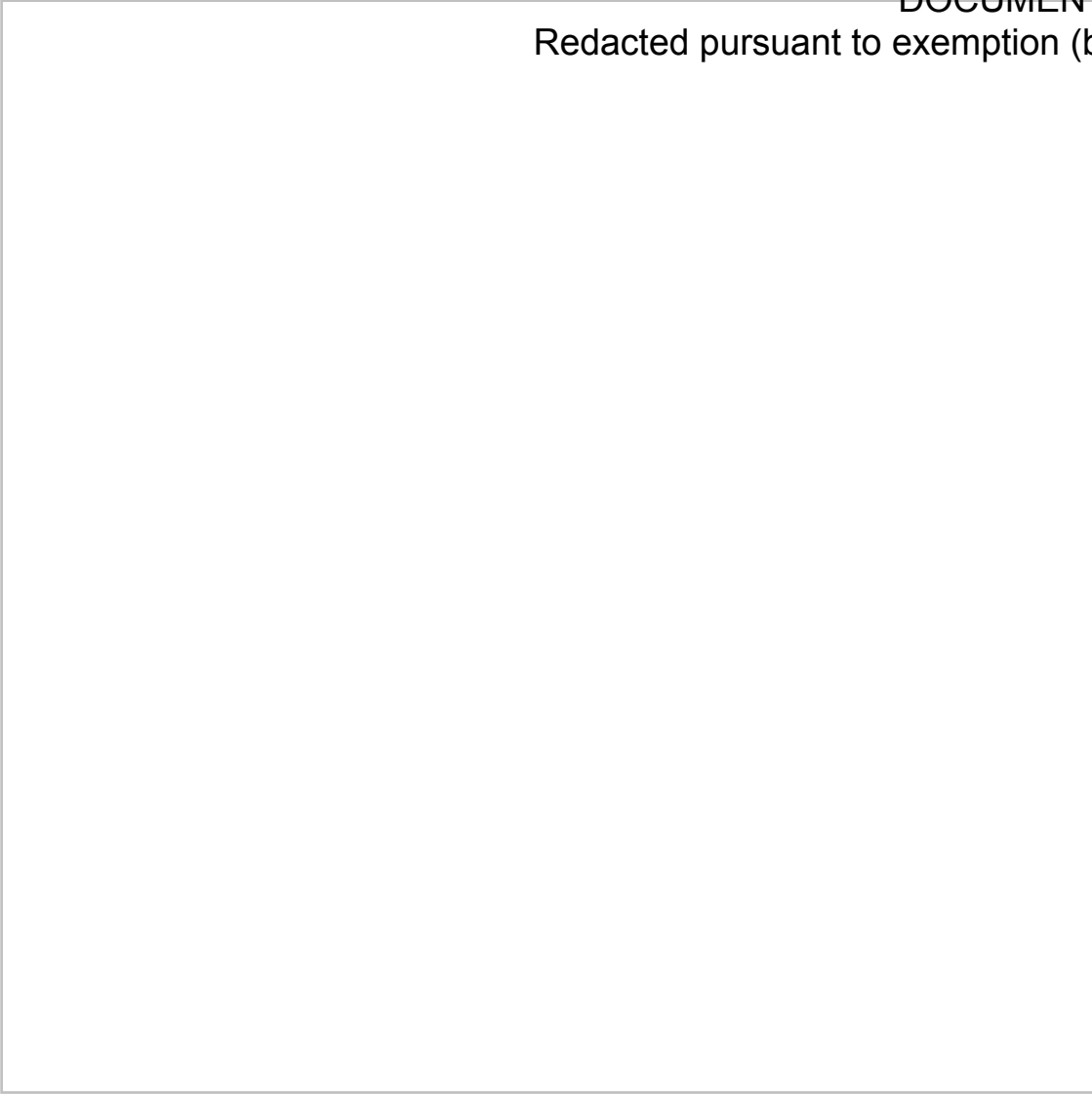
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reports: “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:

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From top national security journalist Walter  
Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief  
columnist:

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From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



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Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:

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One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:

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A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:

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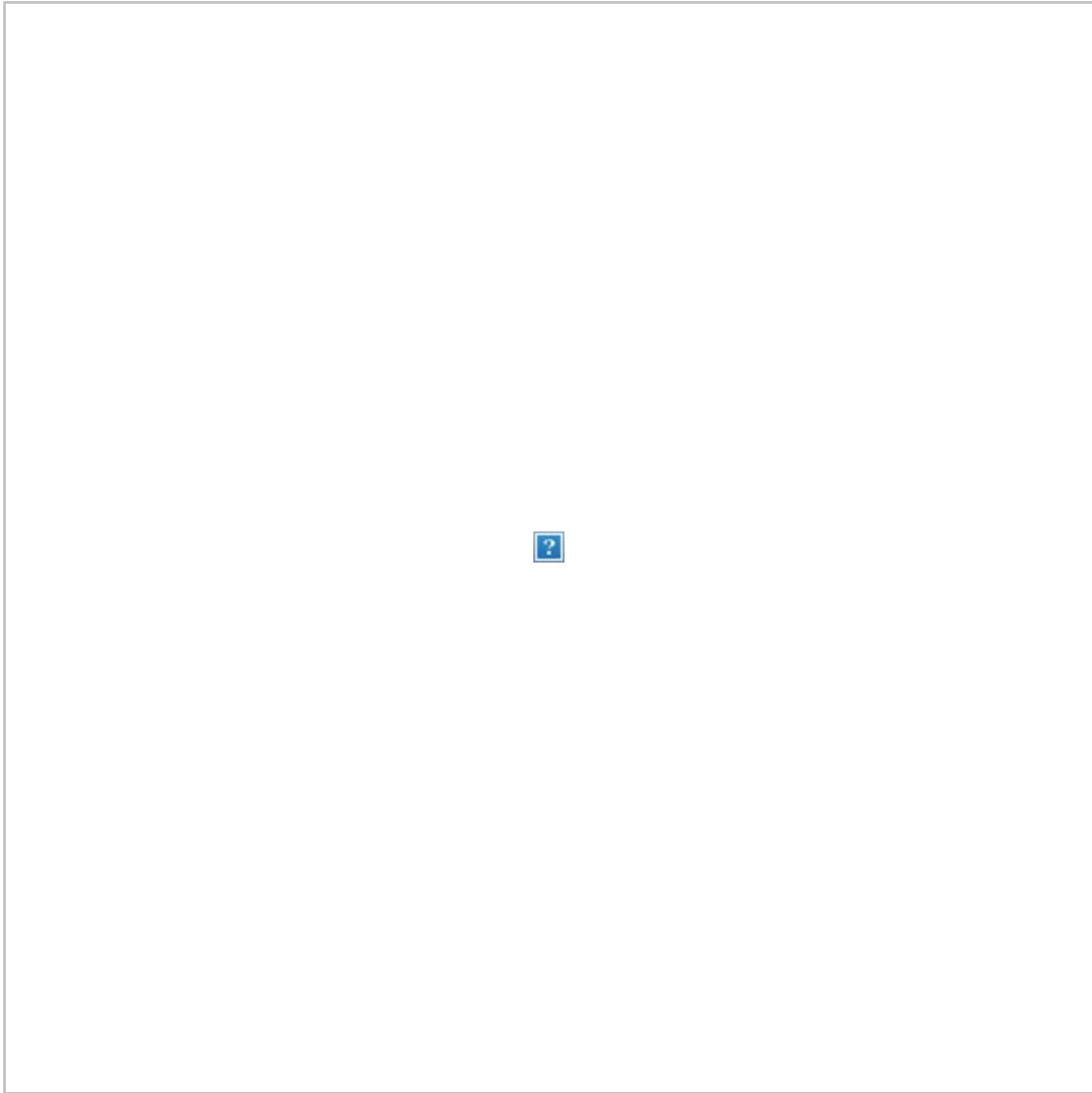


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:



Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign stoked 2020 speculation  
Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)  
with this tweet:



Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor  
and Trump rival:

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A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:

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A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:



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A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:

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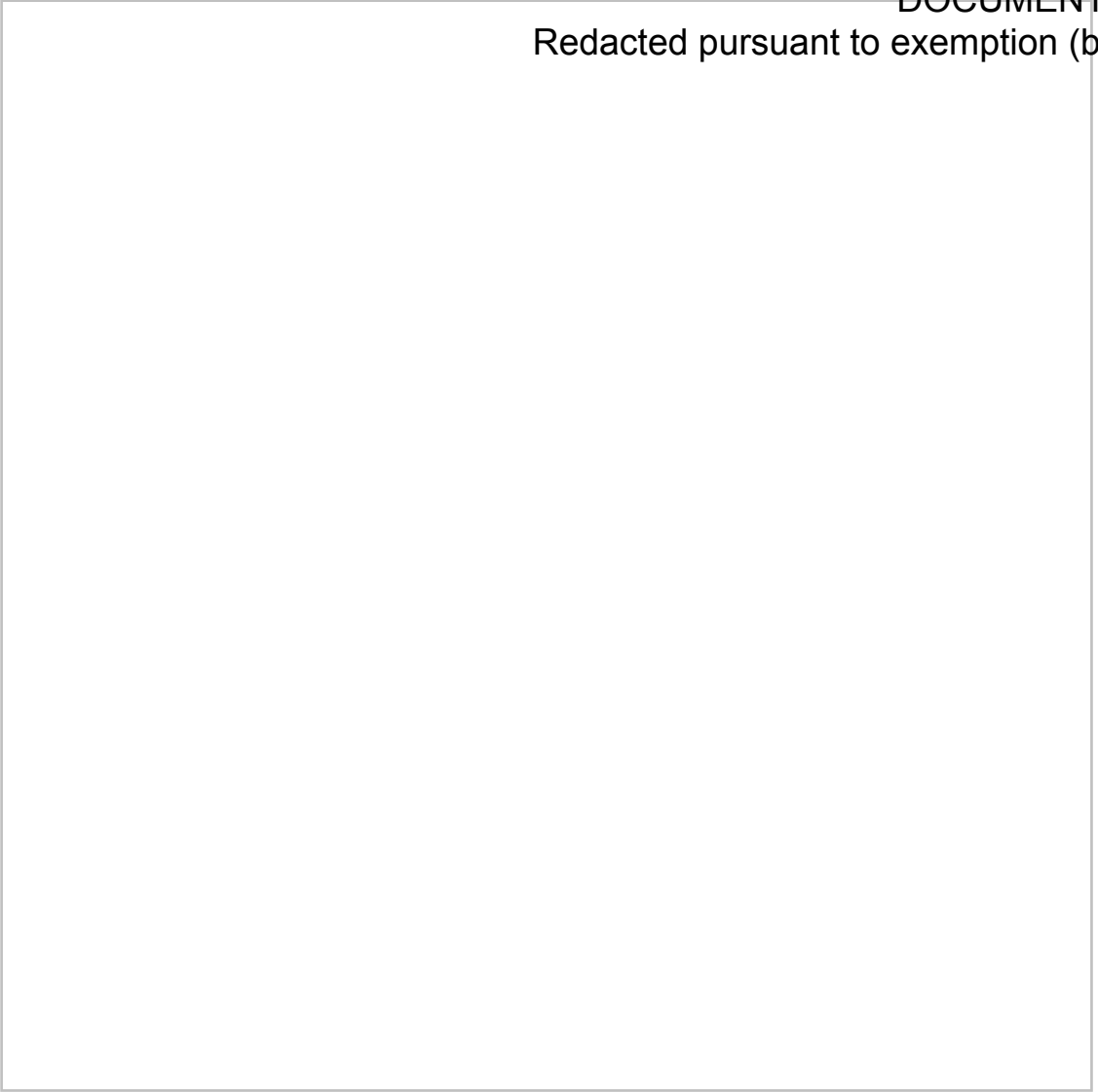


Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:

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From a news writer for the journal Nature:

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Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:

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The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:

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A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:

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And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



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**GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:**

-- New York magazine, "['The Unthinkable Has Happened,'](#)" excerpted from Jayson Greene's new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: "We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven't allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

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is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it.  
Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)  
Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

Isaac Stanley-Becker

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

Cincinnati Enquirer  
Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

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heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

**QUOTE OF THE DAY:**

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

**NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:**

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

DOCUMENT 30

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan](#),  
[Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:

Redacted pursuant to exemption (b)(6)



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:

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Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried  
WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador  
embassy:



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**From:** [The Washington Post](#)

**To:** [Stacie Davis](#)

**Subject:** The Daily 202: James Comey says he's more worried about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns  
**Date:** Friday, April 12, 2019 11:17:04 AM

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# The Daily 202



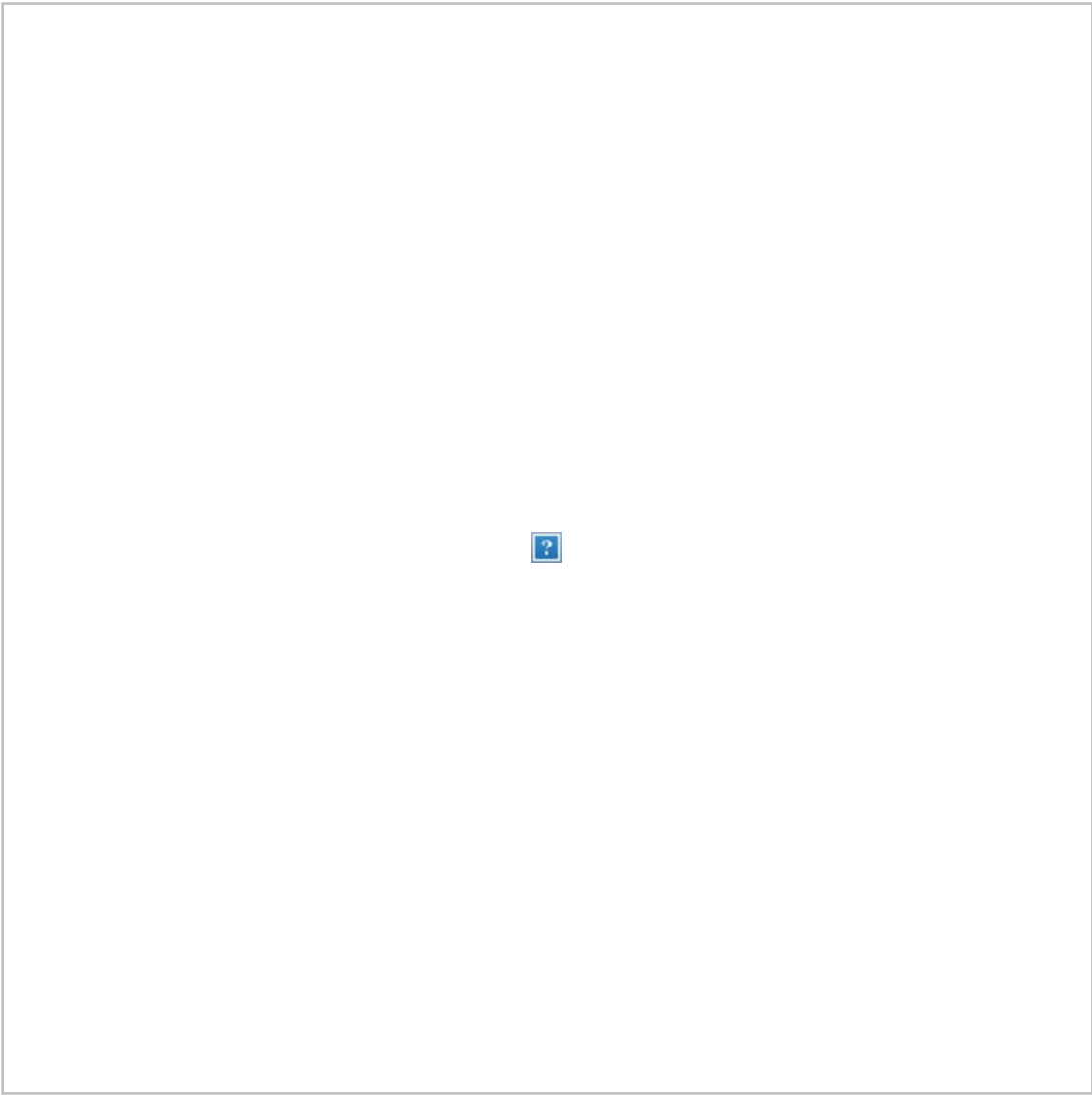
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 Listen to The Big Idea



## James Comey says he's more worried

# about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns



Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)



**BY JAMES HOHMANN**  
*with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro*

## THE BIG IDEA:

**SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr’s claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump’s 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller’s report.**

“I don’t understand what the heck he’s talking about,” Comey said here on Thursday. “But when I hear that kind of language used, it’s concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as ‘spying.’ The reason I’m interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called ‘spying,’ then wow. That’s going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don’t know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign.”

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it’s appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr [said](#) the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. ... Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”



Barr: 'Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

**-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.”**

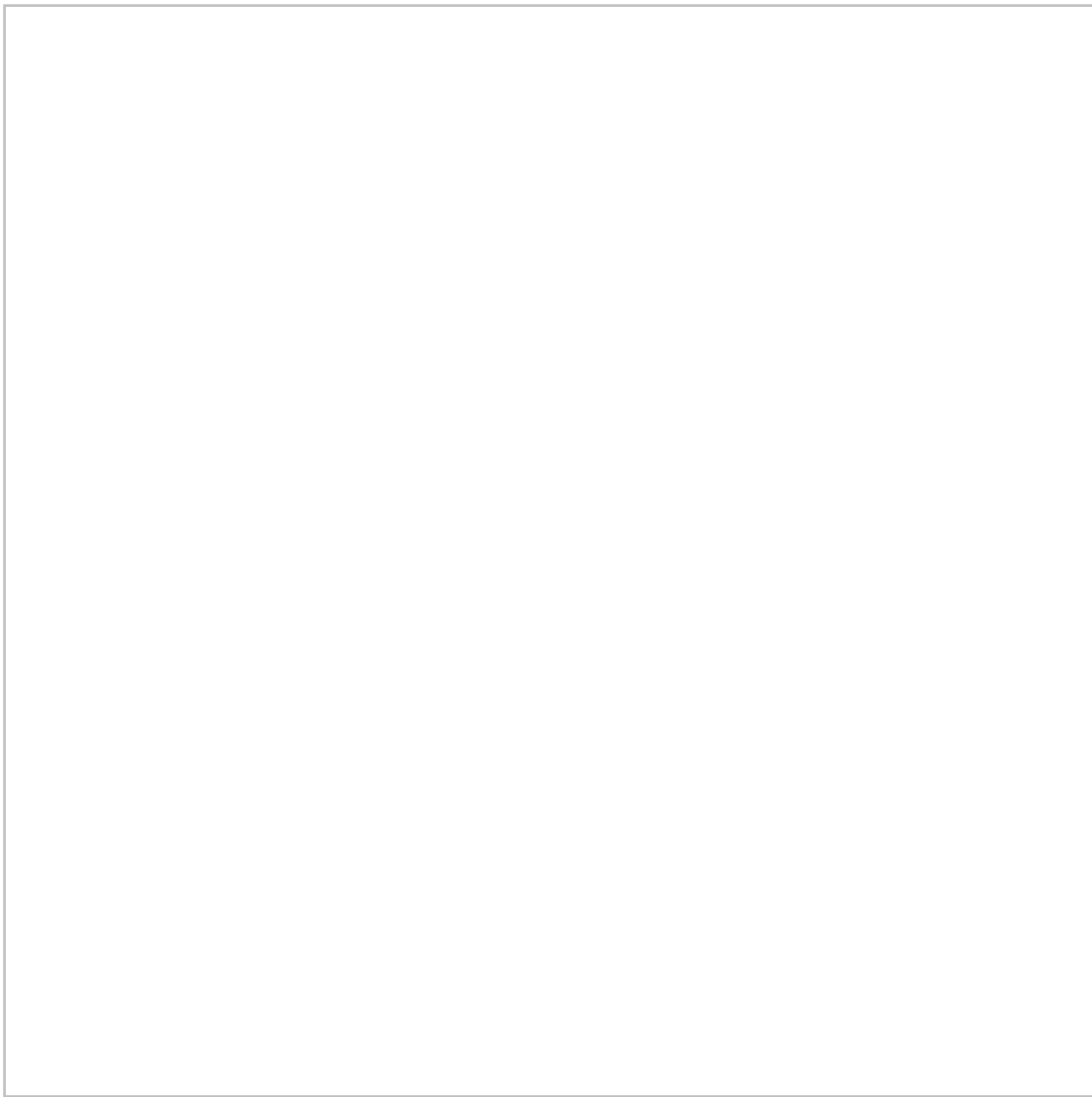
“It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. ... How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

**Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin.** “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

**Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up.** "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."





Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

**An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night.** “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. ... We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here.”

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

**To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin.** “A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it,” he said. “Our fundamental problem is I don’t see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don’t acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again.”



Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary [at face value](#) that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.**

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

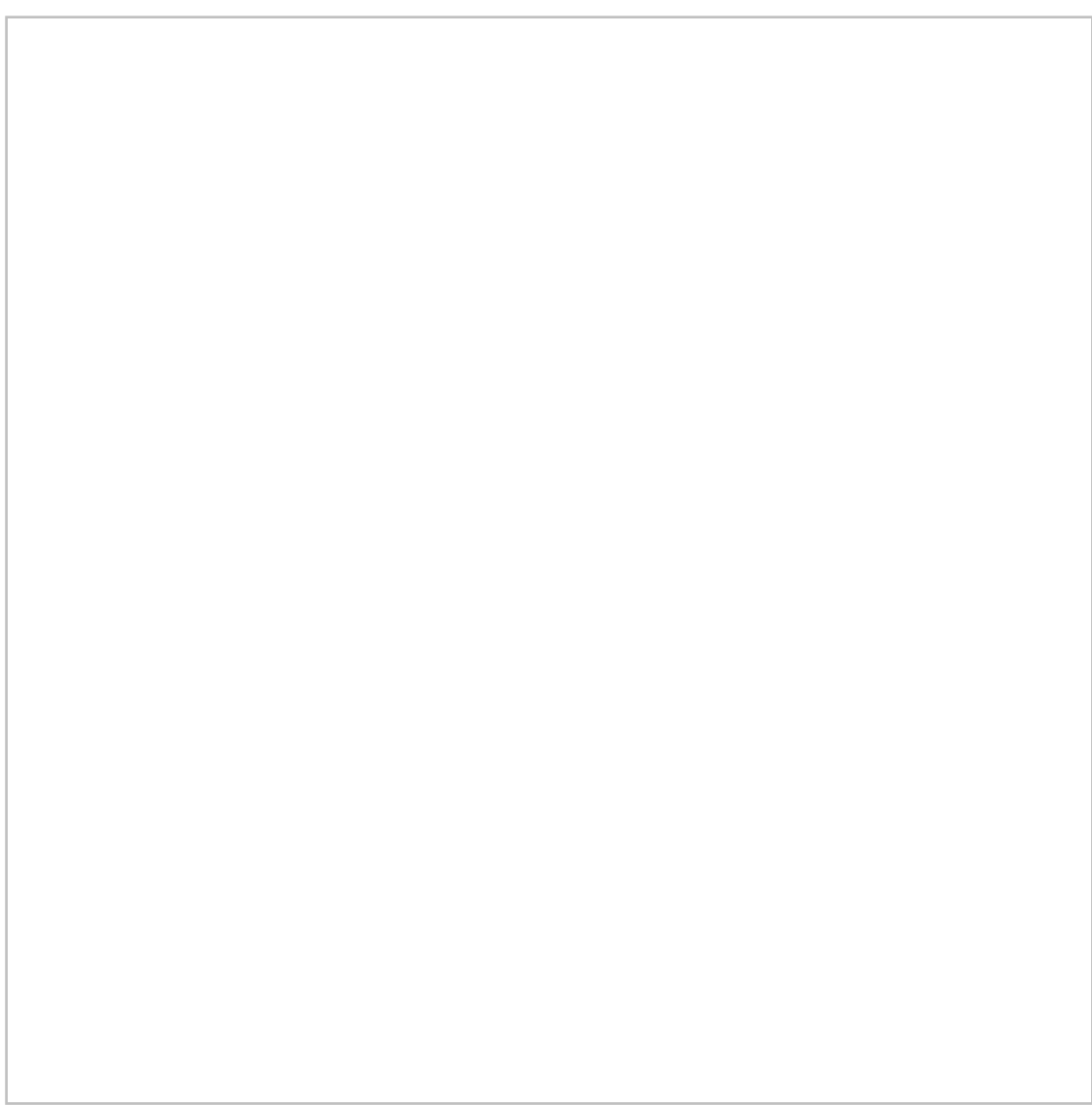
“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

**-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election.** “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

**-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what**

**Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. ([I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.](#))**

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”



Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

**-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week.** He warned Congress in a letter on March 29<sup>th</sup> that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

**Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted.** In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

**“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said.** “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. ... I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. ... The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. ... She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So [they said](#) it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

**“That’s very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case,” Comey continued.** “To explain our judgment that this doesn’t rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. ... You’ll notice that I didn’t talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That’s an important approach to these kinds of things that’s consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn’t need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved.”





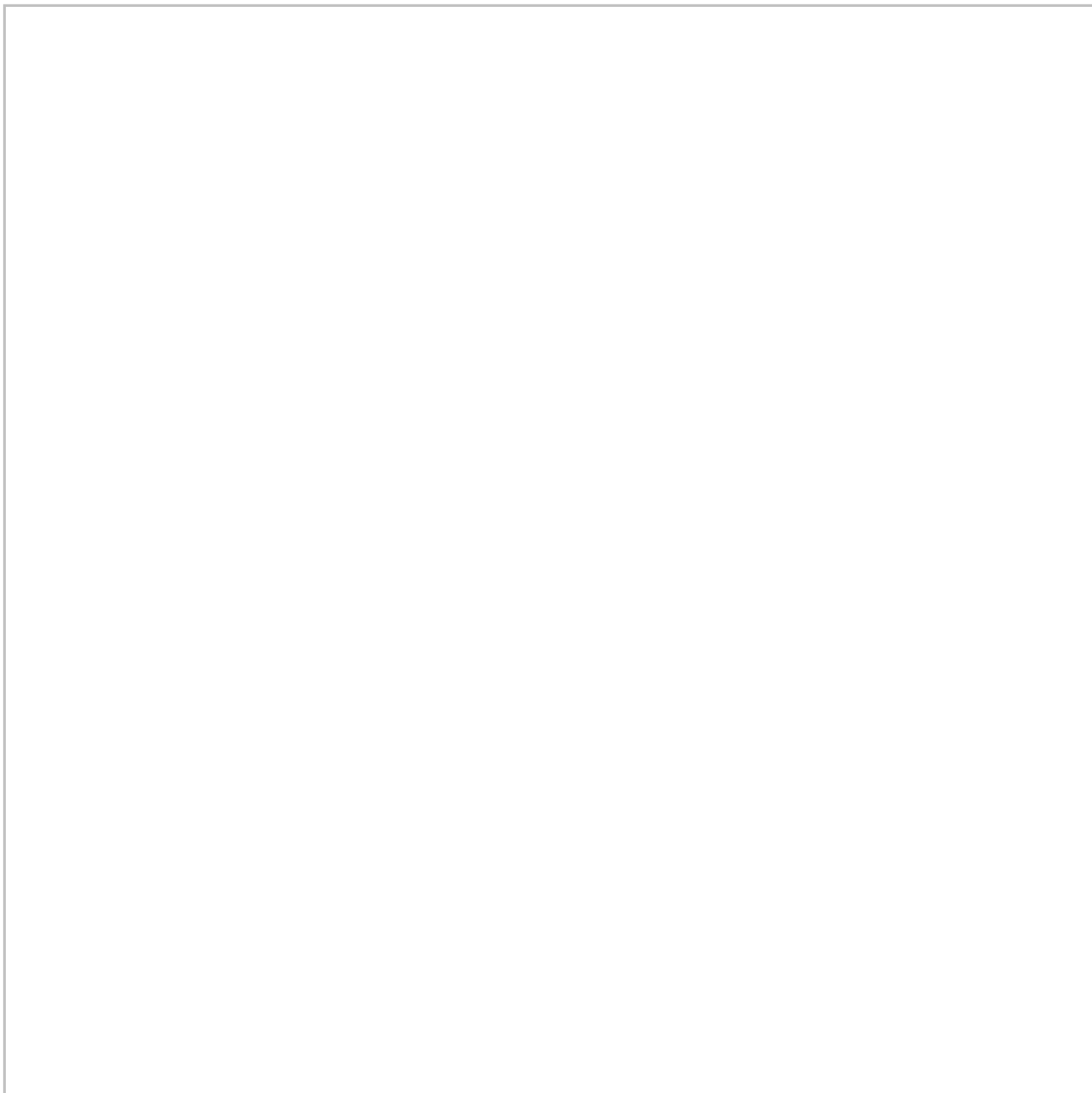
William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee.  
(Andrew Harnik/AP)

**-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview [with the Wall Street Journal](#) yesterday, Rosenstein [defended](#) Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as**

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

**-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration.**

"Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

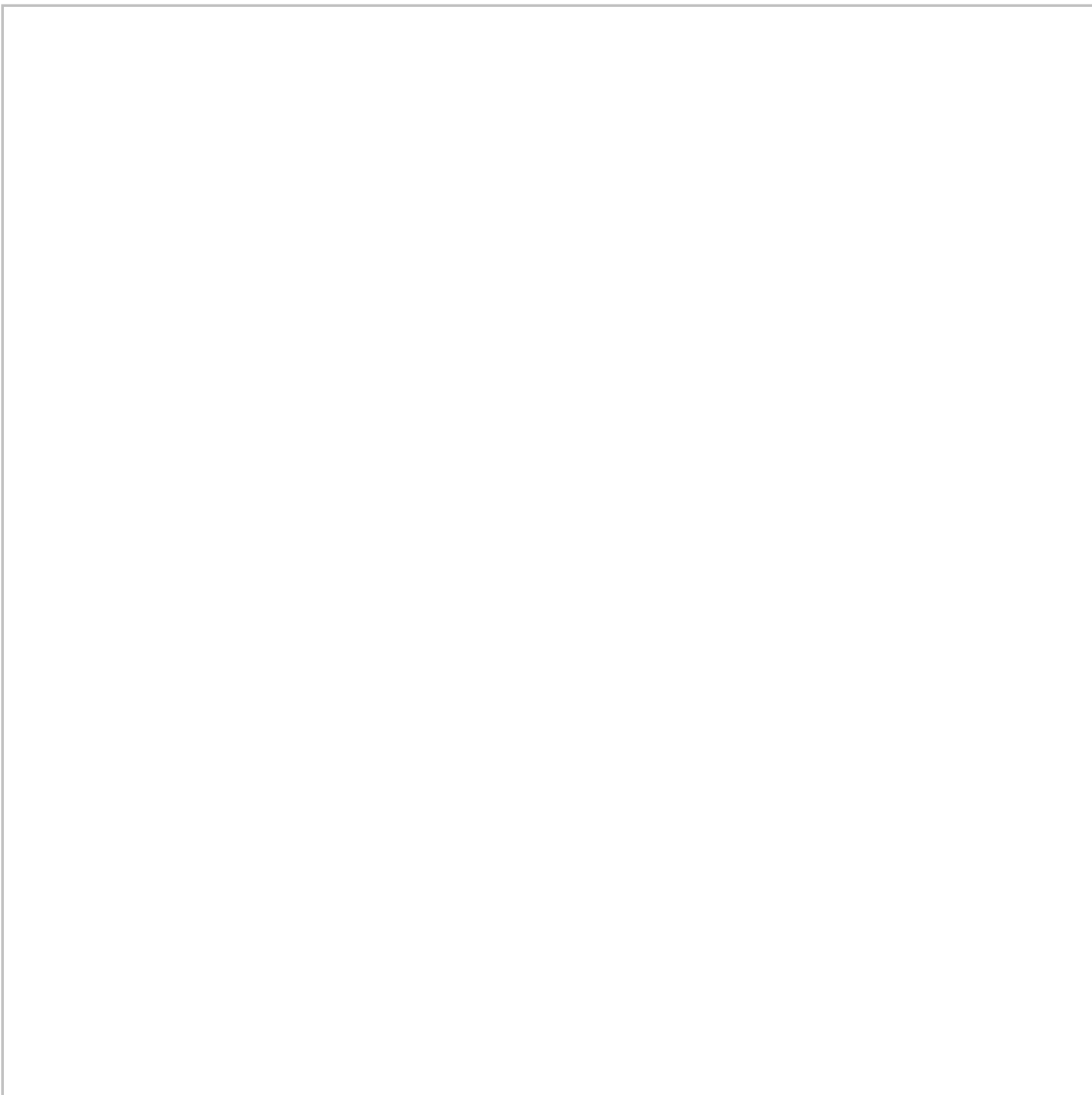


Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

**-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election.** “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw ... was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually ... something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently.”

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. “Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?” Comey asked.



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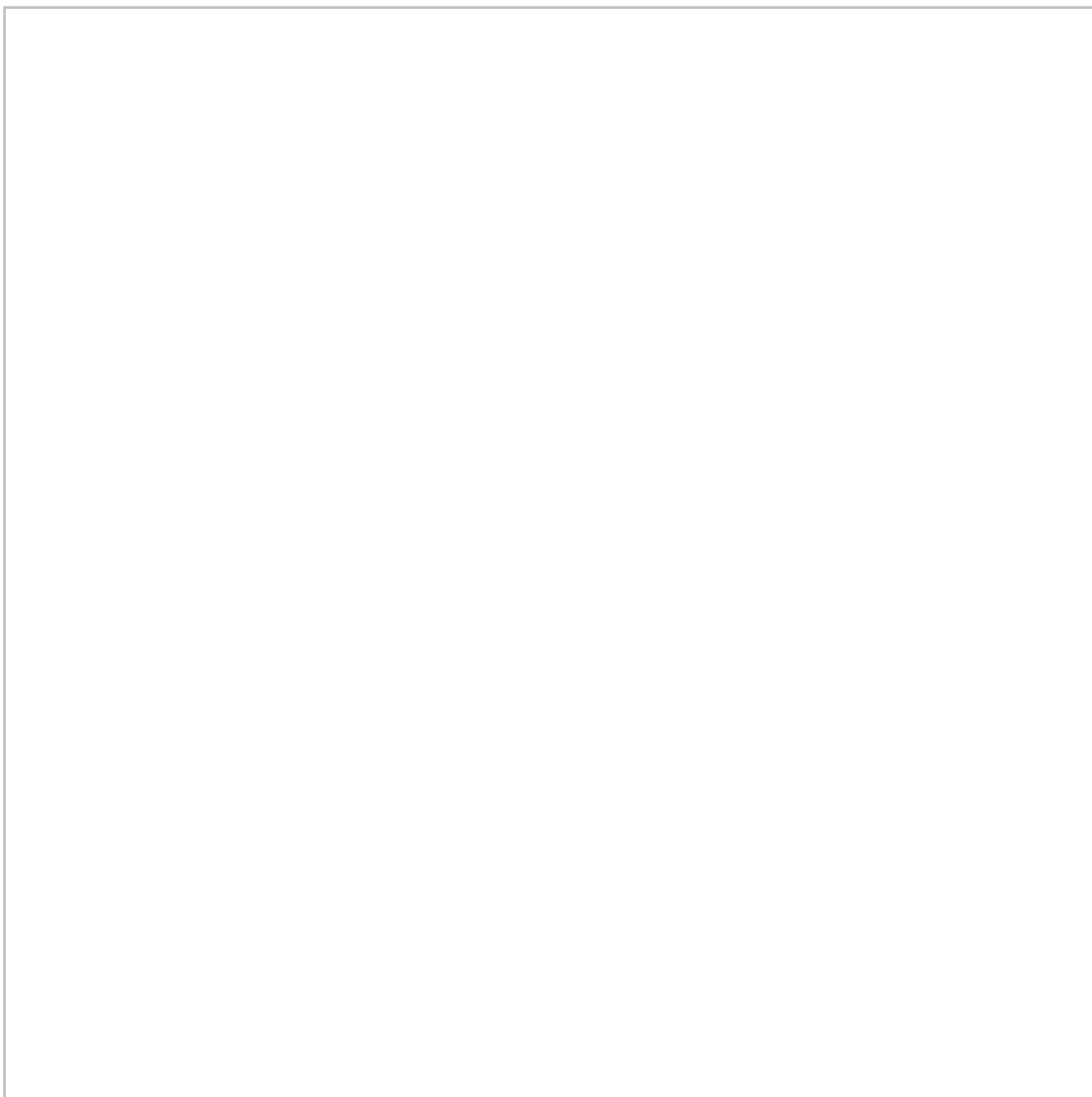
**WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:**



W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

**-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. [Spencer Hsu reports](#): "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering \$50,000 from a pro-**

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. ... Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."



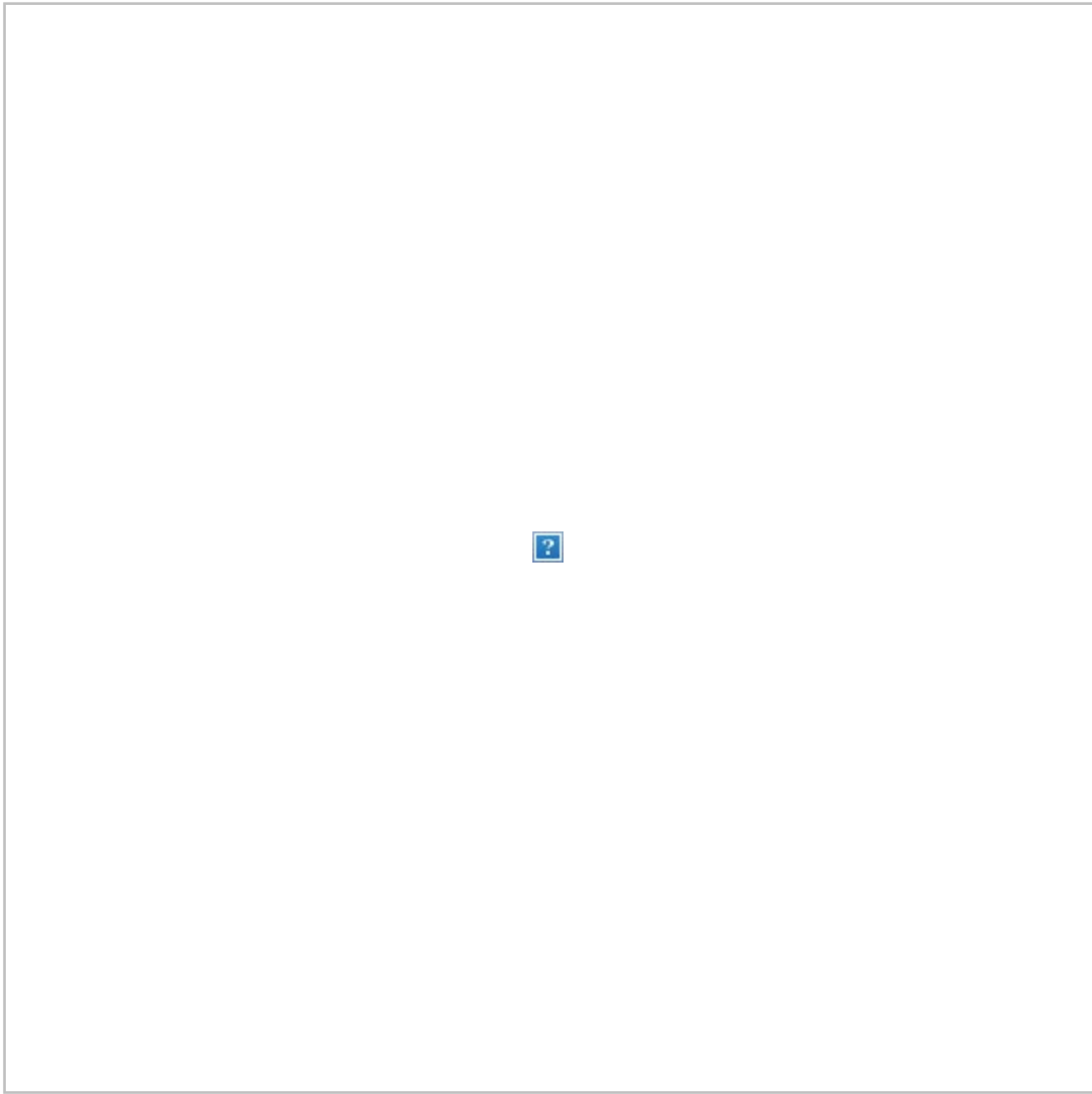
Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

-- The Atlantic just posted [a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump](#) and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a **senior adviser**. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. ... But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

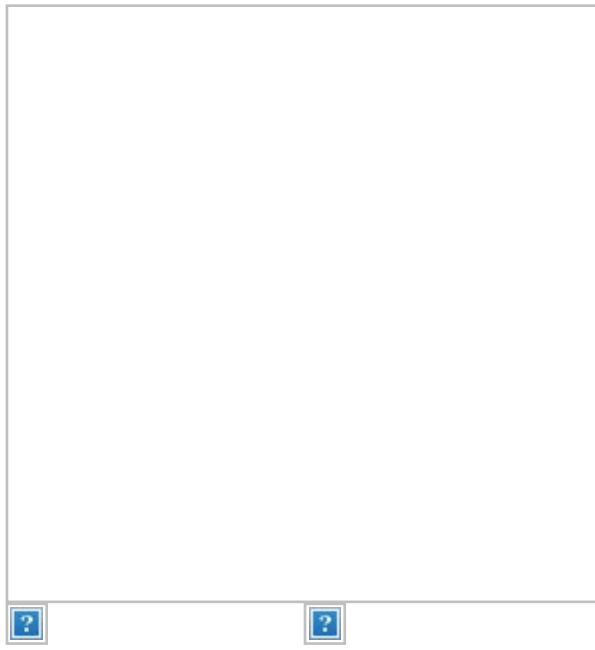


meetings, is 'unique.' ... No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka's role. 'So I didn't know,' he said without pause. 'I'm not sure she knew.'" Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: "She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. ... I can't say she's not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, 'Hey buddy, we were with you all along,' and I'm like, No you weren't. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won."
- Jared Kushner, her husband: "She's like her dad in that she's very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory."
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: "She likes her fine, because she didn't cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don't even want to pronounce her name."



NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)



### GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its “[twins study](#)” with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth’s surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott’s body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. ([Joel Achenbach](#))
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon’s surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. ([Ruth Eglash](#))

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. ([Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch](#))
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. ([Ian Livingston](#))
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

**he was attacked.** The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than \$130,000. ([ABC7](#))

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. ([Sonia Rao](#))
9. **“Rick” Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. ([Los Angeles Times](#))



Trump criticizes 'sanctuary cities'

## **THE IMMIGRATION WARS:**

**-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. [Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop](#): “Trump administration**

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump’s border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

**“The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that ‘there are PR risks as well.’ After the White House pressed again in February, ICE’s legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. ... A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

**“The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. ... According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

**“Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.**

Matthew Albence, who is ICE’s acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. ... DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal.”

**-- Pelosi’s office calls the rebuffed proposal**

**“despicable”:** “The extent of this administration’s cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated,” said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. “Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable.”

**-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not “tough” enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.**



“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” [BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes](#). **“Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp. These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.'”**

**-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda.** [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. ... When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.’ ... **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

**House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as ‘dreamers,’ as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. ... But that legislation does not address the border crisis.”**



Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

## **ASSANGE ARRESTED:**

**-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer**

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. [Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report](#): “American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. ...

**“Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy.”

**-- Ecuador’s decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country’s political shift away from its former leftist leader.** [Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report](#): “By

Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder’s overbearing presence had reached a decision. ... The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a ‘political imposition.’ ... The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno’s predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious.”

**-- Following Assange’s arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign.** “I know nothing about WikiLeaks,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I’ve been seeing what’s happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general.” But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. ([John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez](#))

**-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.”** Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” ([CNN](#))

**-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.”** ([The Telegraph](#))

**-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed.** ([The Sun](#))

**-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat?** [Reis Thebault investigates](#): “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. ... So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? ... While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."



**MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:**

**-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation.** [Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report](#): "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. ... Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' ... Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

**-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients.** [Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report](#): "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will ‘fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.’ **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike, the sports apparel behemoth.**”

**-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who’s accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month.** Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. ([Bade and Helderman](#))

**-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he “really” misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle.** [The Sun-Sentinel’s Anthony Man reports](#): “‘The worst part of this is being broke,’ he said. ... ‘I’ve lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I’m not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.’”

**-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to**

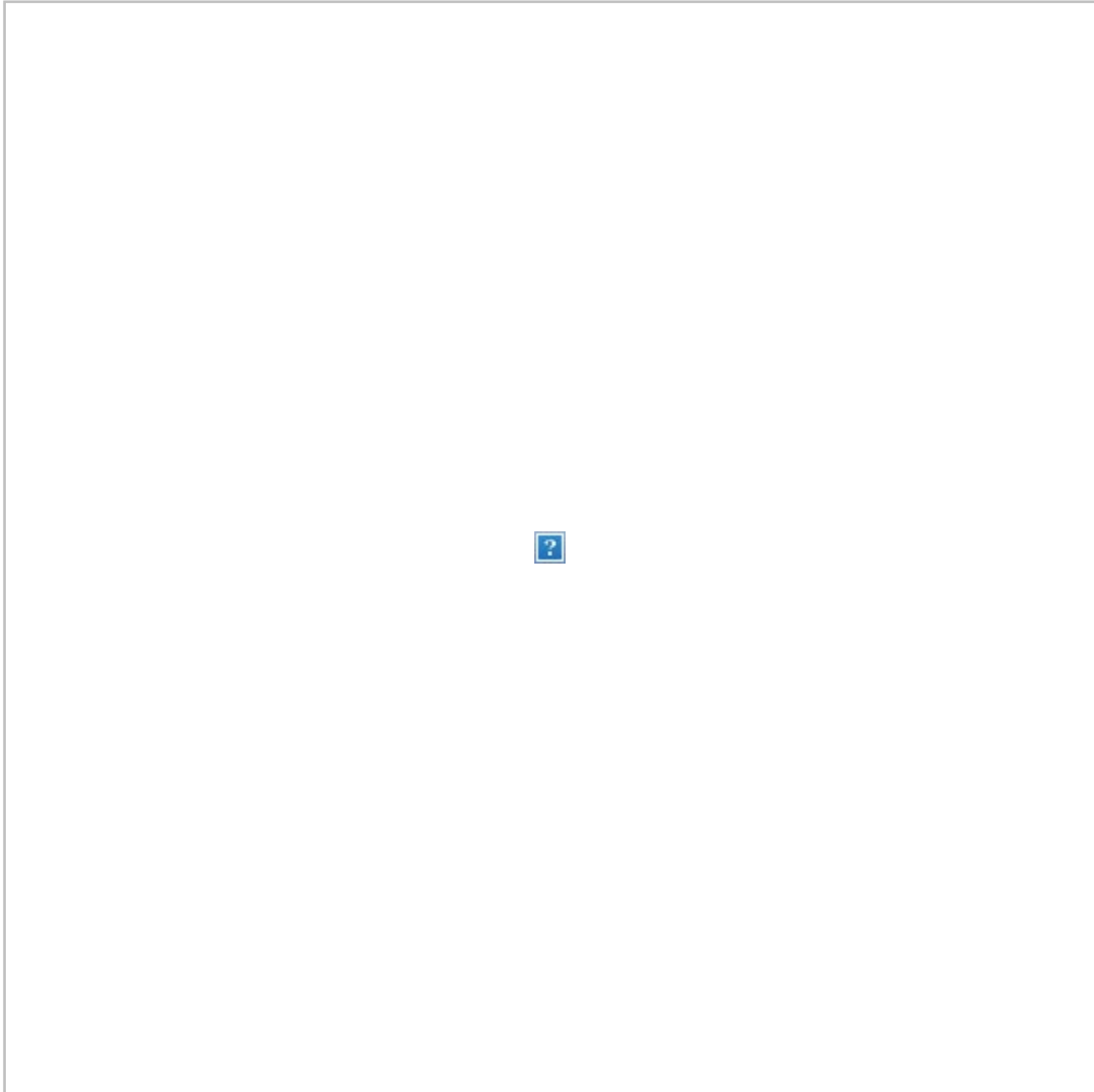


**Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. [The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report](#):**

"While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. ... An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

**-- [In an op-ed for The Post](#), Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis:** "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. ... Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants.”



Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE:**

**-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated**

**opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed.** [Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report](#): “A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. ... As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized.” (According to [ABC News](#) and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

**A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a “9-9-9” plan to address the situation at the border.** “Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a '9-9-9' plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

**-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years.** Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. [Mike DeBonis and Bade report](#): “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ ... While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

**-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” [Paletta reports](#). “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. ... Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”**



President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office.  
(Evan Vucci/AP)

## **THE NEW WORLD ORDER:**

**-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. [David Nakamura reports](#):** "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' ... The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

**-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup.**

[Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report](#): "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. ... Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

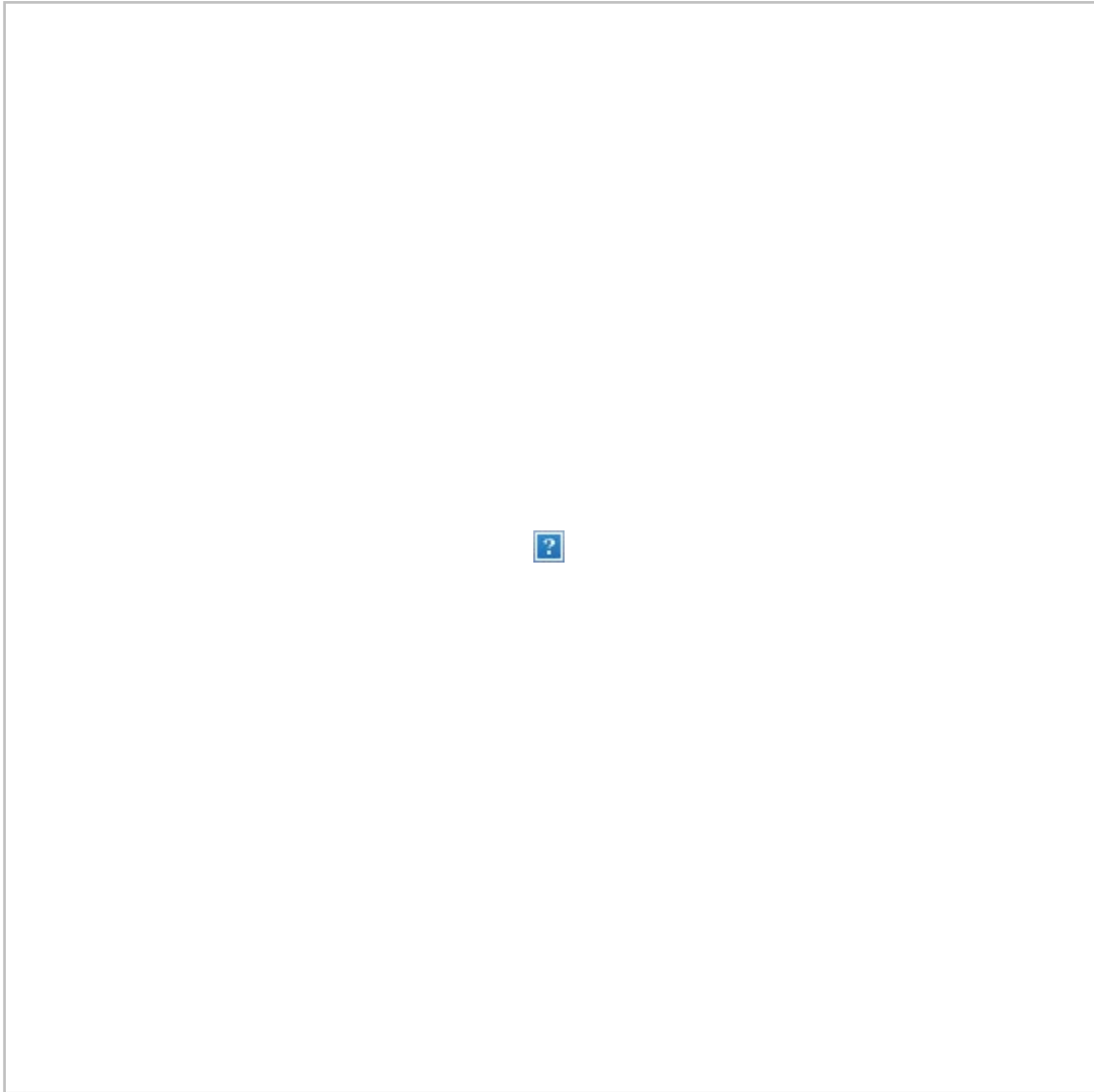
**-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin.** [Pamela Constable reports](#): "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the



deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack.

Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

**-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's \$2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space.** [Missy Ryan reports](#): "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' ... In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. ... He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."



Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

## **2020 WATCH:**

**-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. [Colby Itkowitz reports](#):** “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. ... Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. ... Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and **vociferous segregationist**. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." ([CNN](#))

-- In the latest of a [long line](#) of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over \$100 million.

[NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports](#): "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. ... Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over \$100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. ... Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

**-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled.** According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. ([NBC News](#))

**-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today.** [Politico's Alex Thompson reports](#): "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. ... The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed.”

**-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives.**

[Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report](#): “The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O’Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class.”

**-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa.** According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. ([Politico](#))

**-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new “war room” aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities.** [NBC News’s Heidi Przybyla reports](#): “Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump’s temperament and personal attributes during Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the party’s main organizing arm says it’s making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be ‘hyper-focused’ on the impact of Trump’s policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to ‘put a human face’ on what’s happened since then.”

**This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president’s planned theme for his reelection bid of “promises kept,” as [Toluse](#)**

[Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported](#) last month. Trump has replaced “his 2016 ‘Make America Great Again’ slogan with ‘Keep America Great!’ and [told] his supporters to chant ‘Finish the wall’ instead of ‘Build the wall,’ even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built.”

**-- Gender differences in views about Trump’s job performance and the size and scope of government have widened.** [Pew’s Hannah Hartig reports](#): “In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. ... There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump’s job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove.”

**-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points.** [John Wagner reports](#): “The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on 'Lou Dobbs Tonight,' indicated that Trump's overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump's overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent."





'Some people did something:' Rep. Omar's remarks in context

## **MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:**

**-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who's to blame for the Senate's impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill.** [Politico's John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report](#): "Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a 'legislative graveyard,' adding that McConnell's Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush's judicial picks more than a decade ago. 'I know exactly who started it,' McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn't get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted."

**-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia.** [Eli Rosenberg reports](#): "Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as 'some people did something.' The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. ... Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability.”

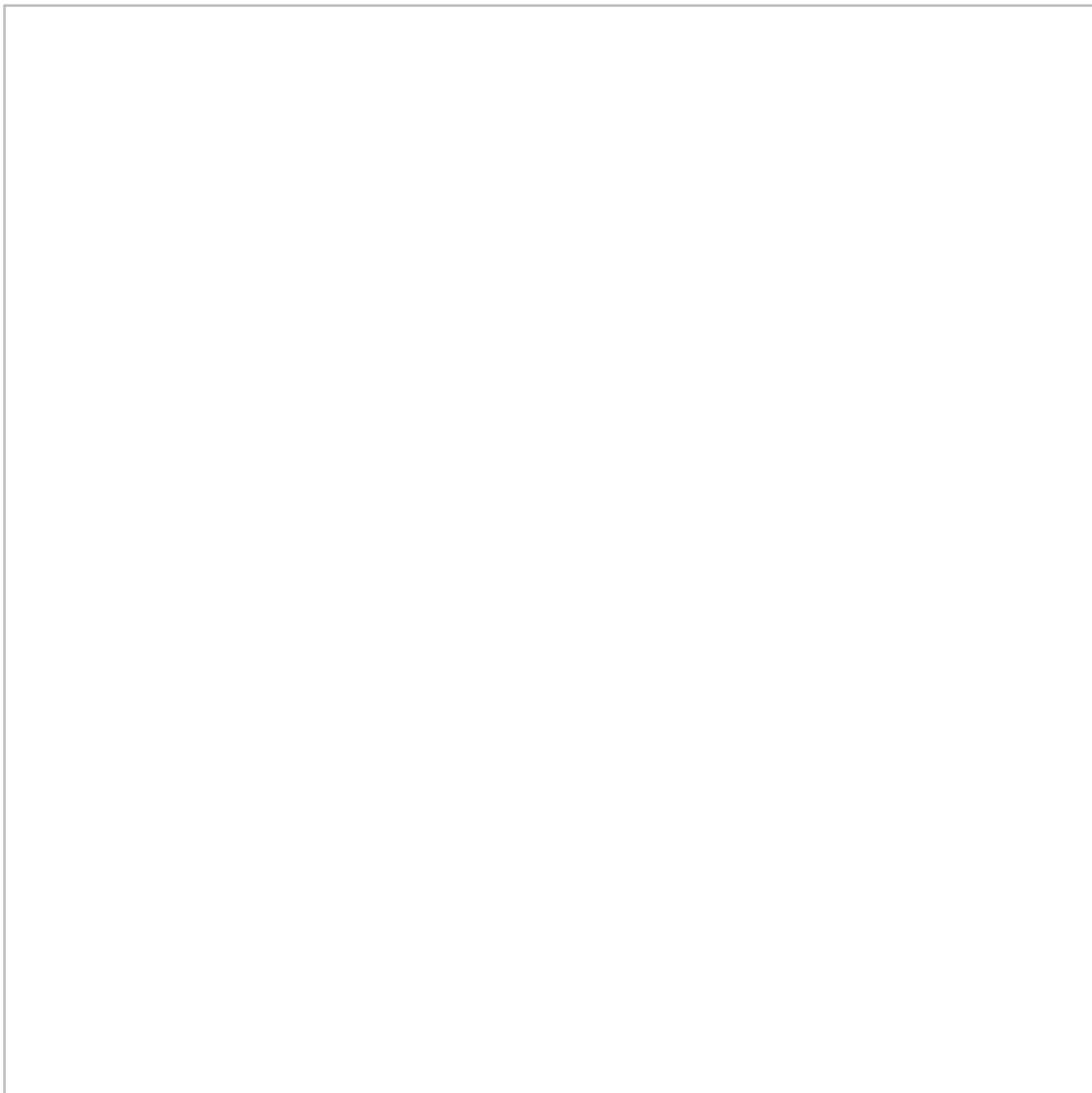
**-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, [the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports](#):** On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech “to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. ... Calling Islam a ‘cancer,’ Loomer told followers that ‘Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.’ She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement ‘an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.’ An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules.”

**-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days “probably should be over.” [Recode's Eric Johnson](#)**

[reports](#): “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. ... ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:**

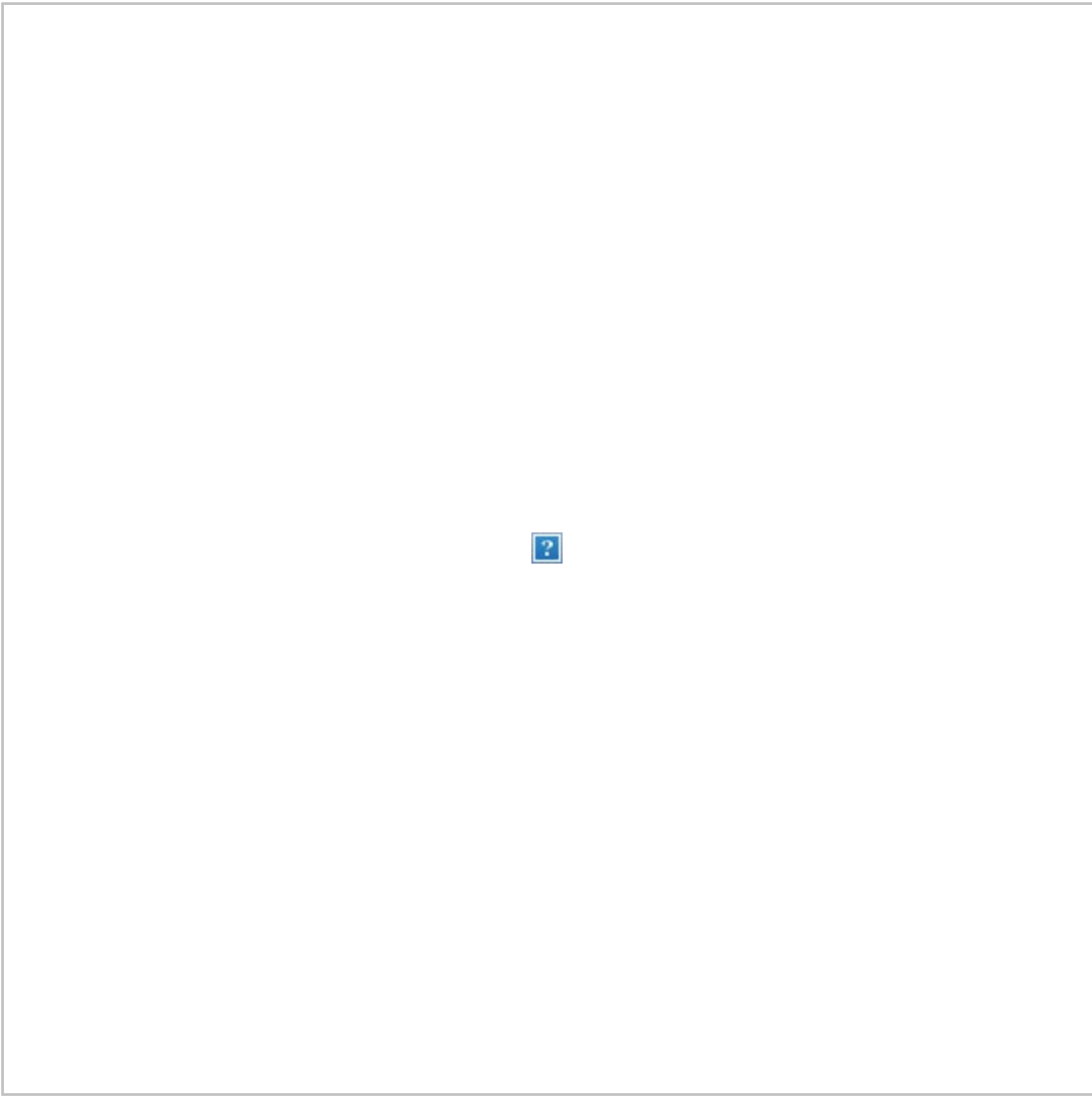
A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:



From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:



From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:



Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:

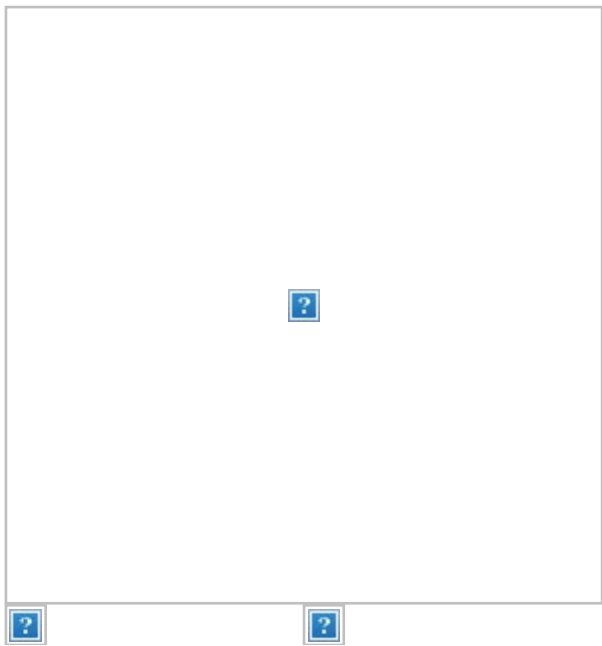
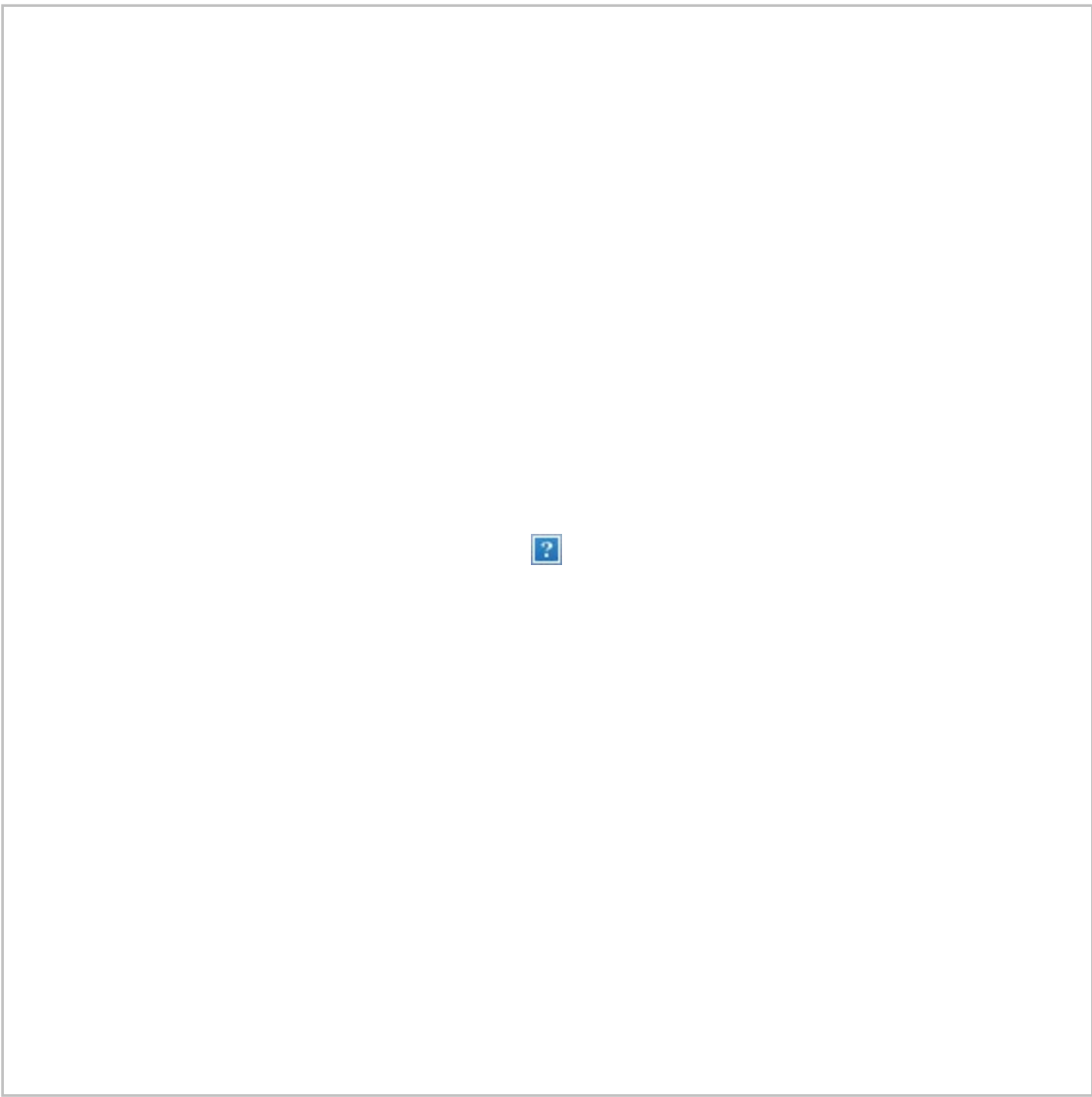


One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:



A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:



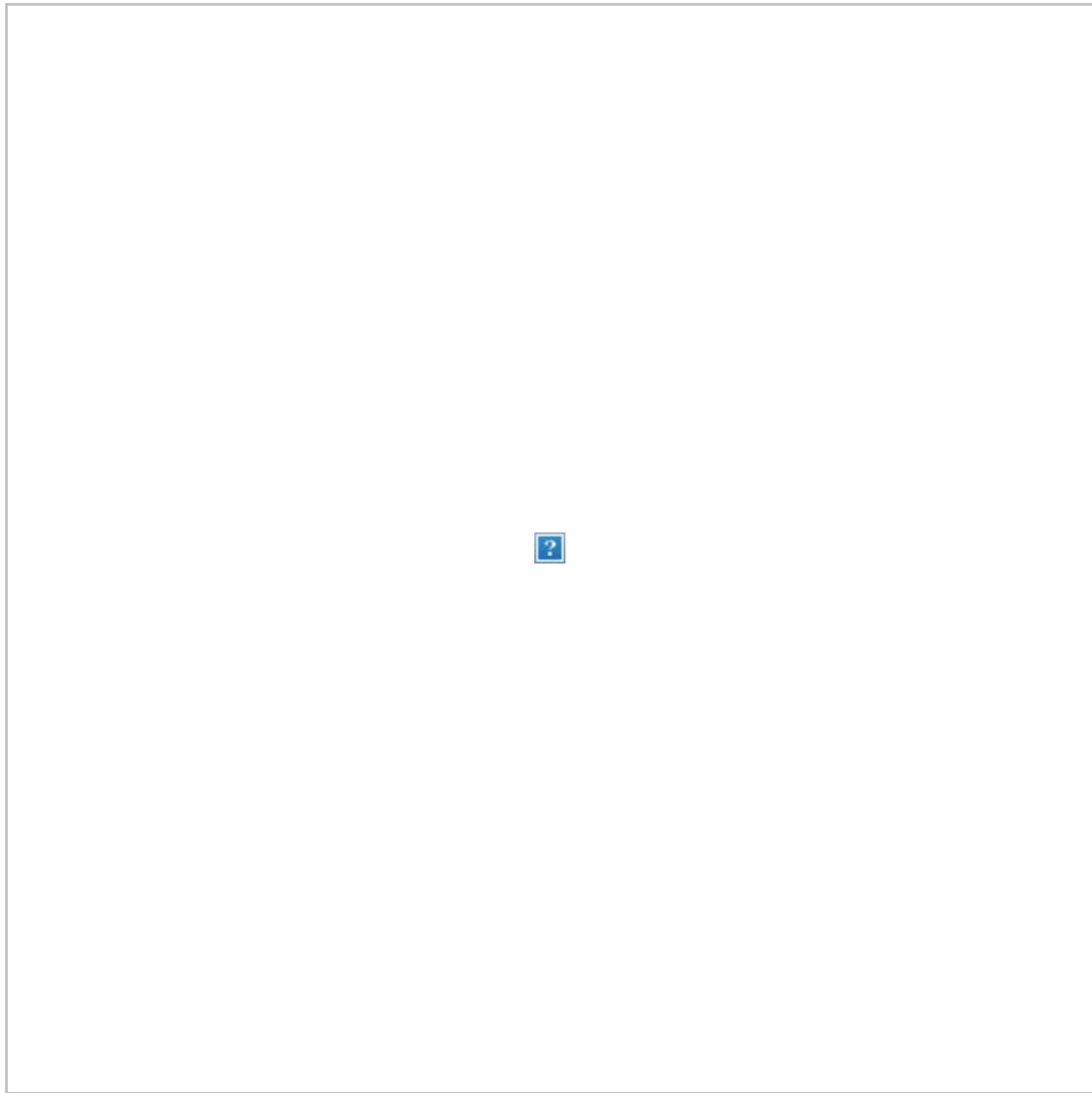


A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

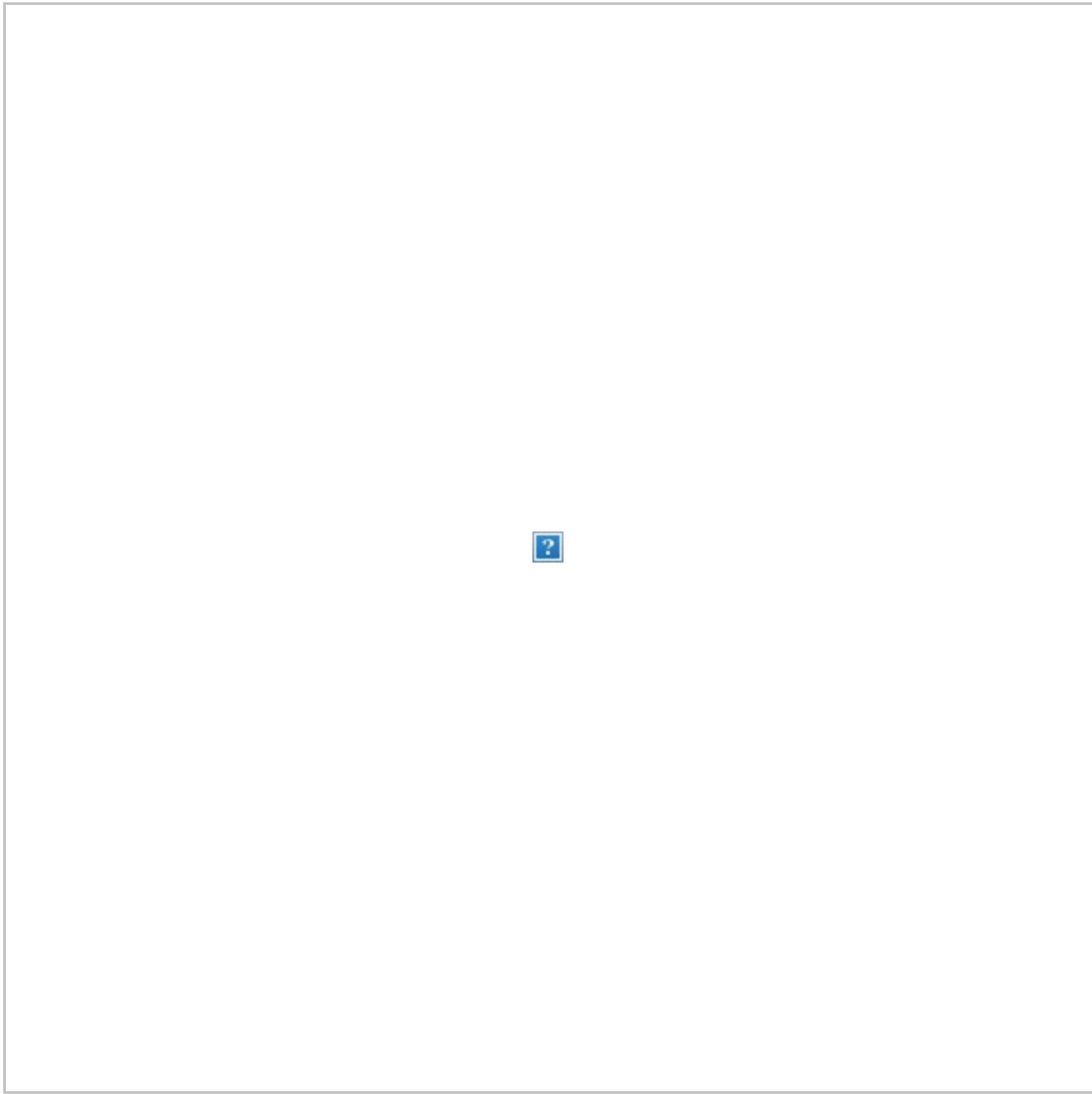


Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once [wrestled an alligator](#) to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:



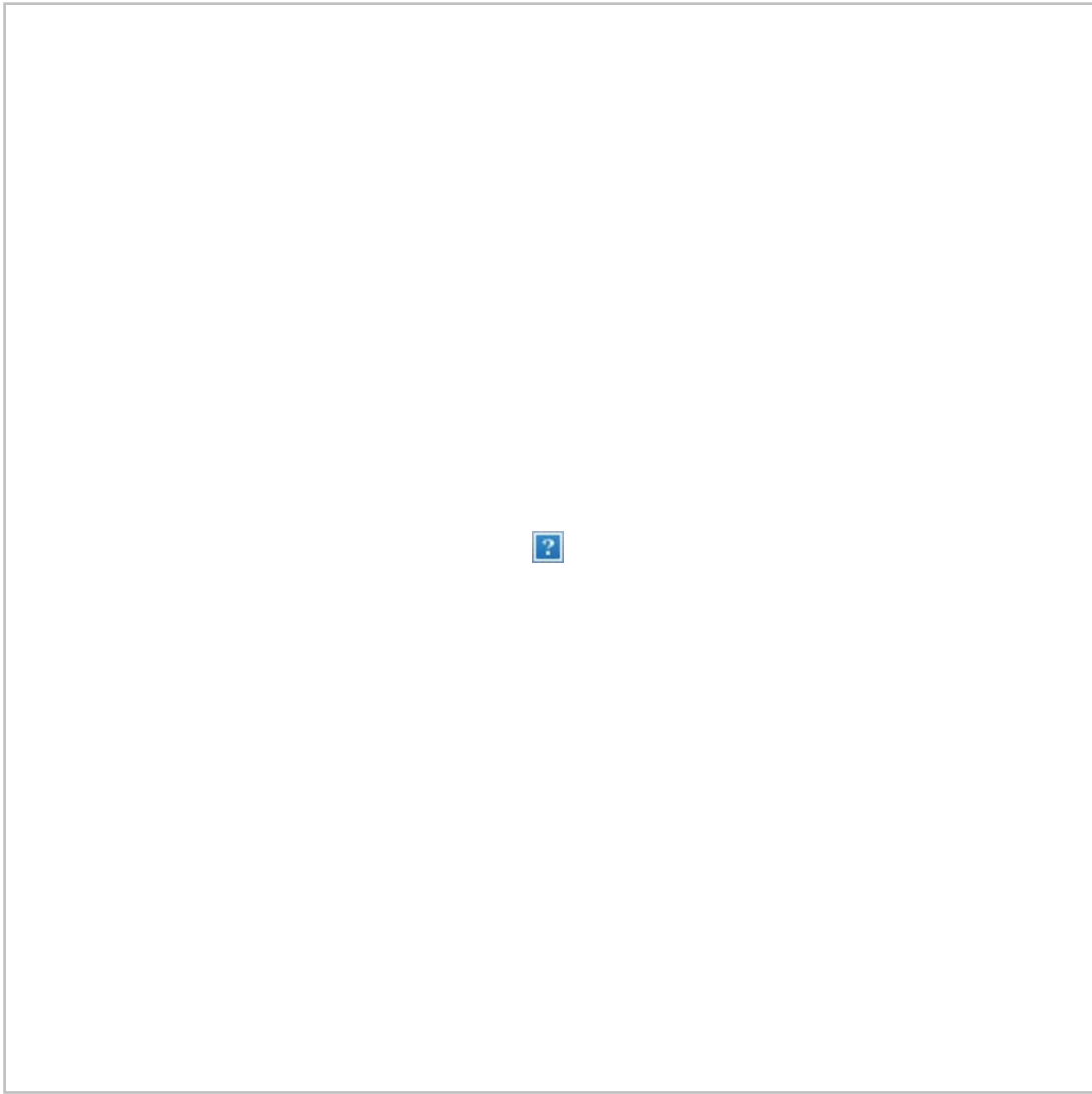
Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:



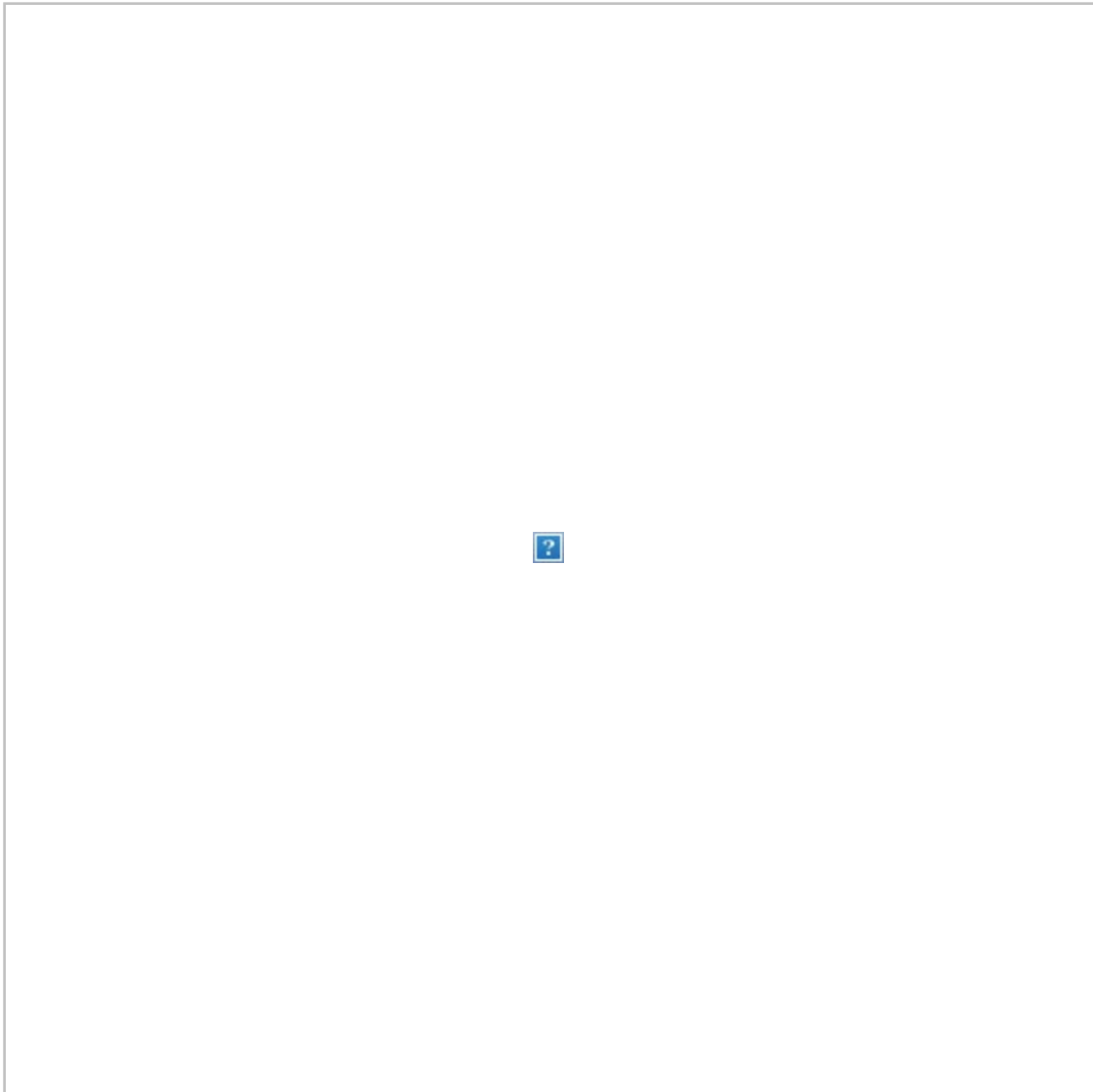
A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:



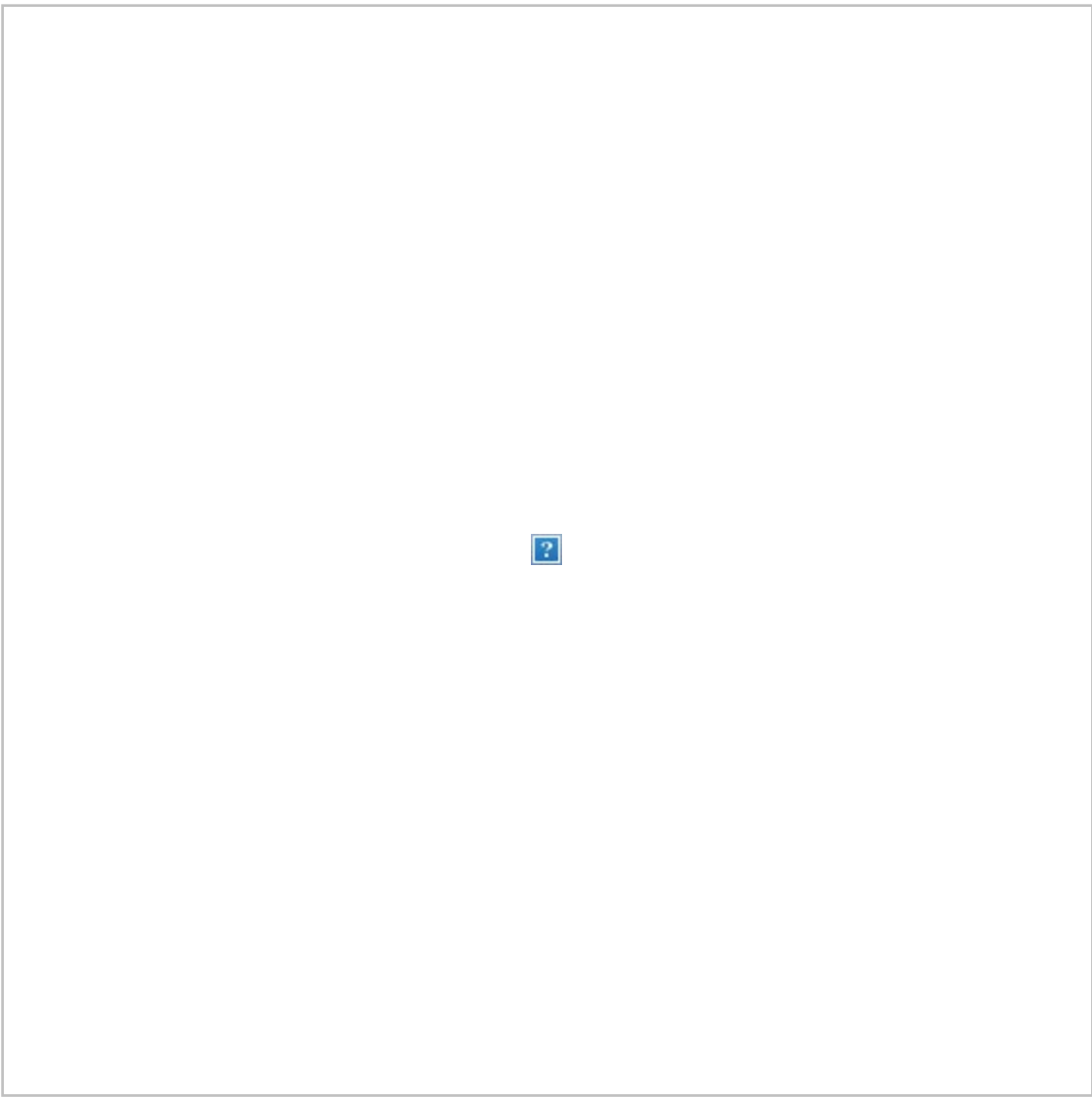
A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:



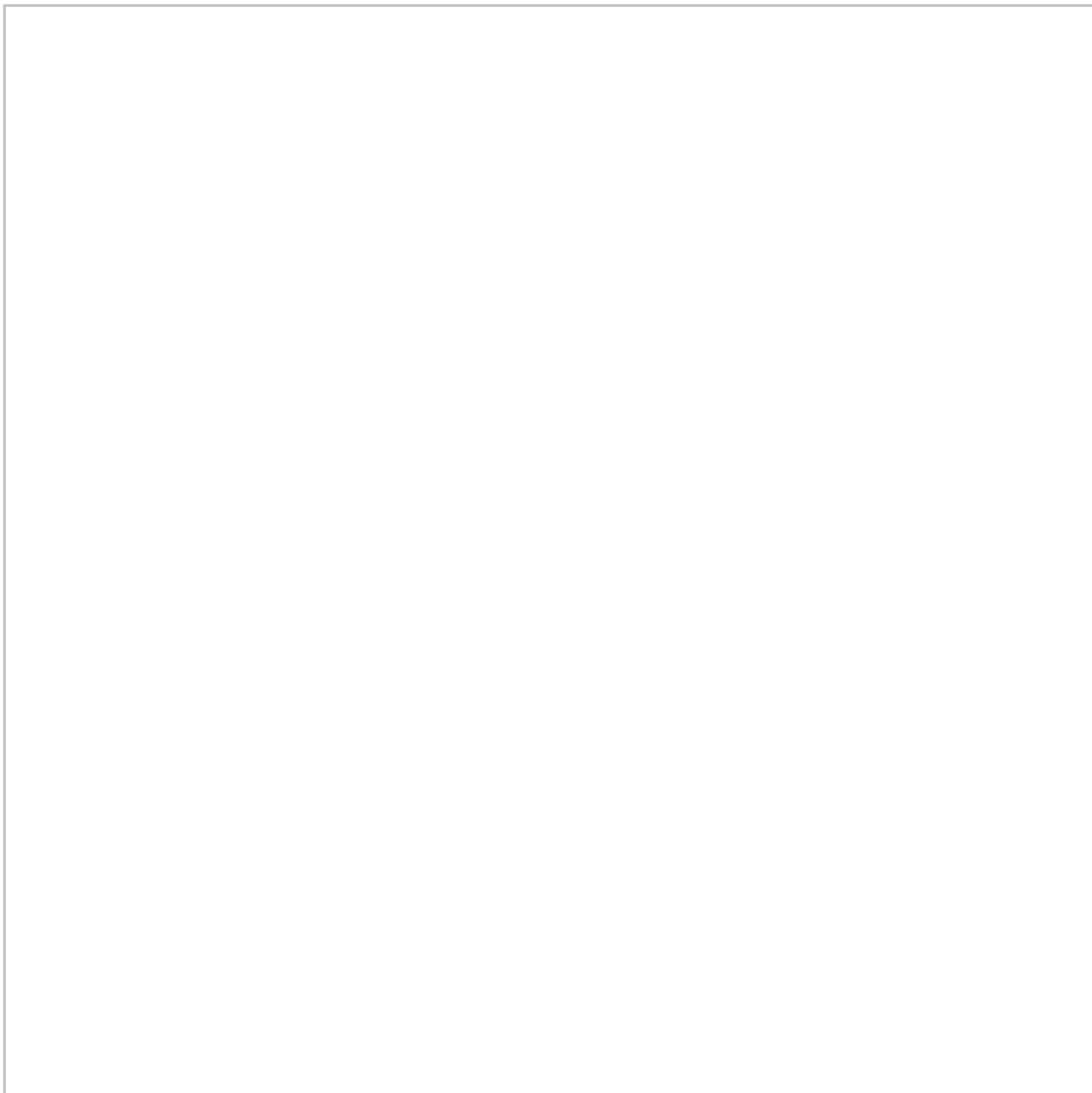
A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:



Female lawmakers celebrated the work of [Katie Bouman](#), the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:



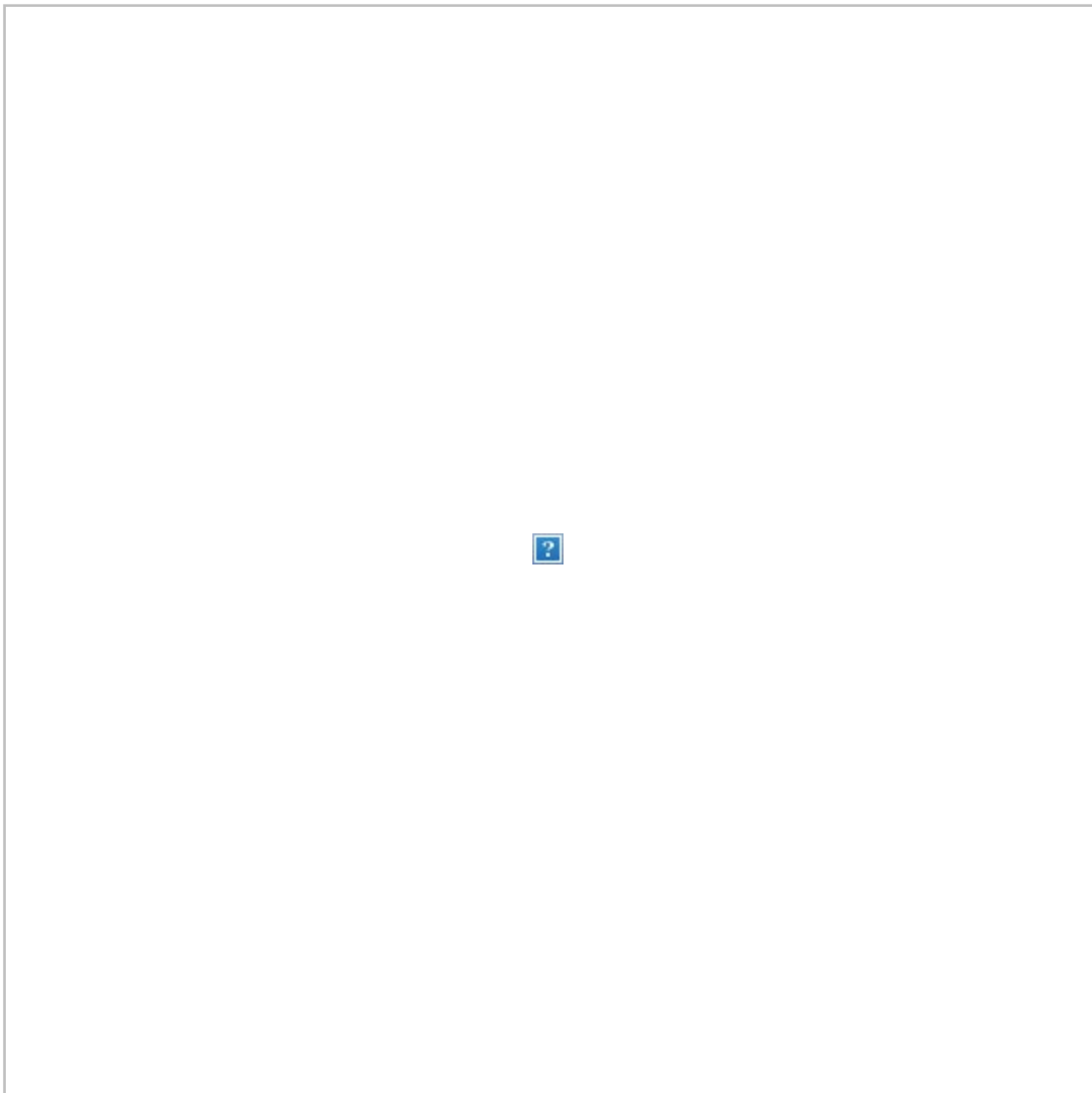




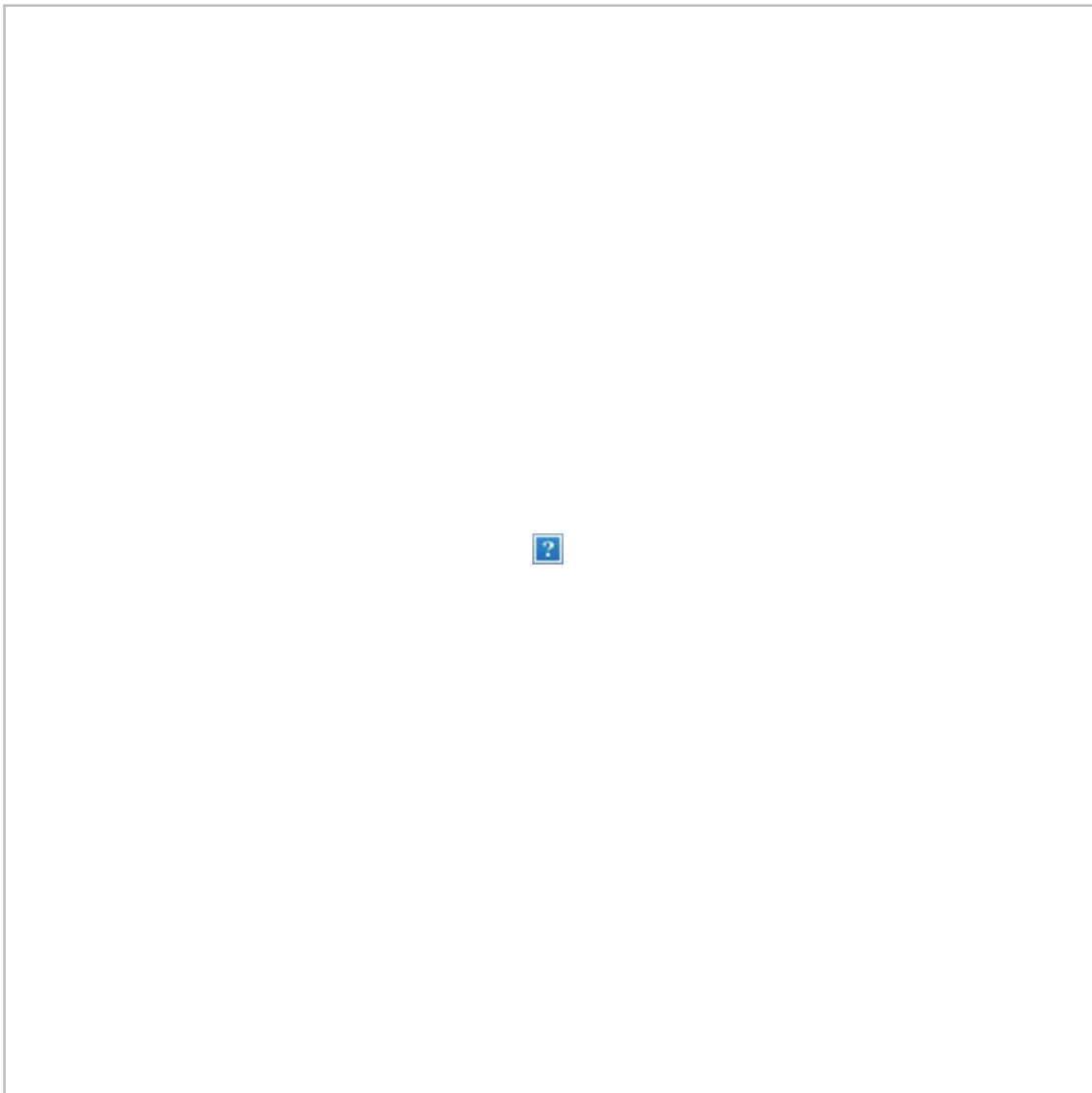
From a news writer for the journal Nature:



Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:



The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:



A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:



And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:



## GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, “[‘The Unthinkable Has Happened,’](#)” excerpted from Jayson Greene’s new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: “We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven’t allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "[Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump](#)," a Q&A by Isaac

**Chotiner:** "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

**HOT ON THE LEFT:**

**A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty.**

[Isaac Stanley-Becker](#)

**HOT ON THE RIGHT:**

**"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the**

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

**Cincinnati Enquirer:**

“Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. ... The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal



fateful terms. 'God's word says, 'He who sheds man's blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,'" said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to 'repent with us.'

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called 'heartbeat bill' passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access."

## DAYBOOK:

**Trump** will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

**Looking ahead:** Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day invasion.  
([Felicia Sonmez](#))

## QUOTE OF THE DAY:

**Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights.** The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. ... He knows me.” ([Isaac Stanley-Becker](#))

## NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

**-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there.** [The Capital Weather Gang forecasts](#): “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

**-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in**

**defending their Stanley Cup.** ([Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg](#))

**-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves.** [Susan Svrluga reports](#): "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of \$27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated \$400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

**-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home.** The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. ([Dana Hedgpeth](#))

## **VIDEOS OF THE DAY:**

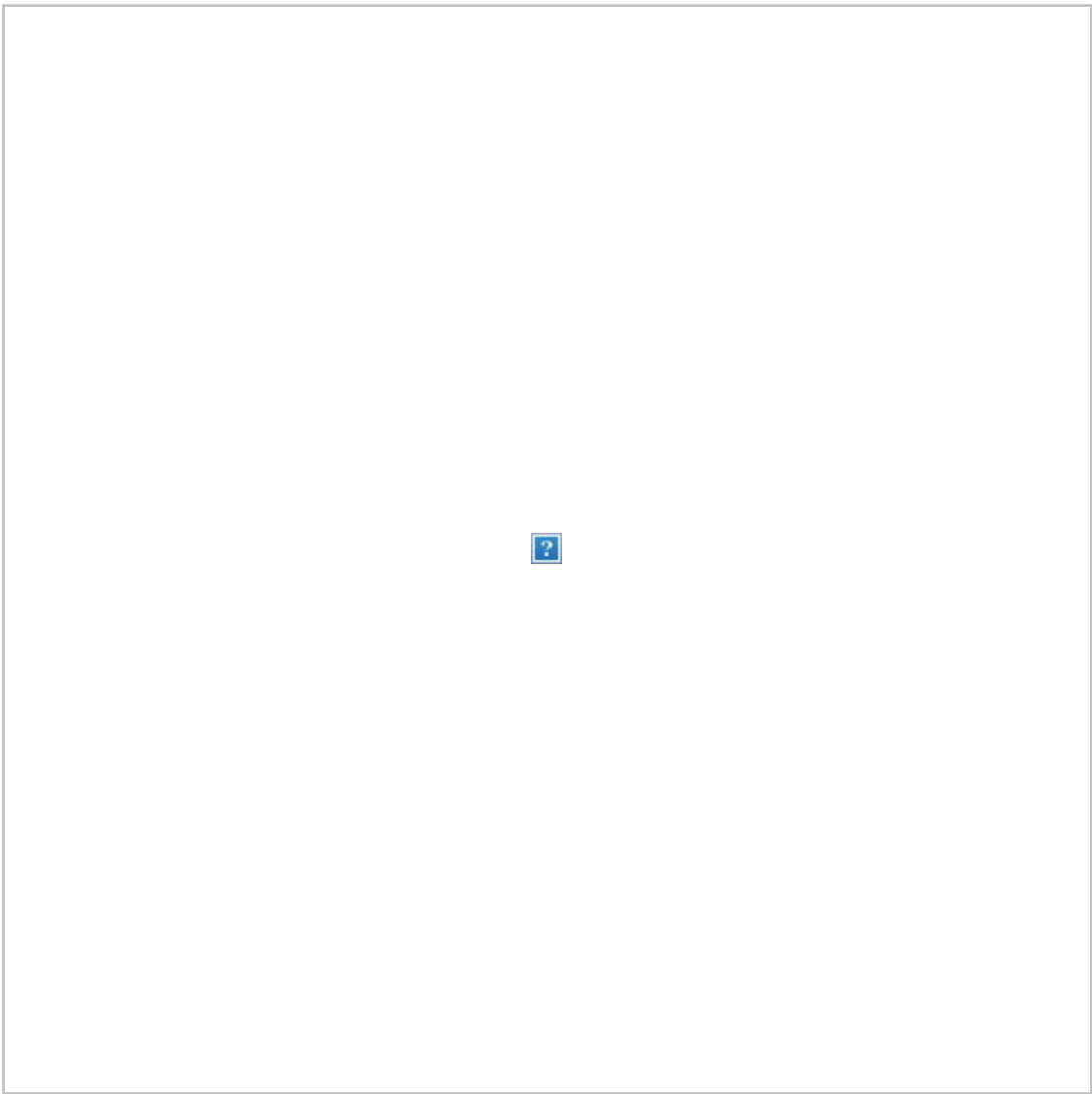
Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:



Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:



Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:



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